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WILLIAM MELMOTH ESQ.R

Ob.t April. 6.th 1743.

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Lady Grey
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THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE CONSIDERED.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS.

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BY THE LATE

WILLIAM MELMOTH,

OF LINCOLN'S INN, ESQUIRE.

The Thirtieth Edition.

S/i

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A SHORT CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING TREATISE.

IT may add Weight, perhaps, to the Reflections contained in the following Pages, to inform the Reader, that the Author's Life was one uniform Exemplar of thoſe Precepts which, with ſo benevolent a Zeal, and ſo pathetic a Simplicity of Style, he endeavours to recommend to general Practice. He left others to contend for Modes of Faith, and inflame themſelves and the World with endleſs Controverſy: It was the wiſer Purpoſe of his more ennobled Aim, to act up to thoſe clear Rules of Con-

duct which Revelation hath graciouſly preſcribed. He poſſeſſed by Temper every moral Virtue; by Religion every Chriſtian Grace. He had a Humanity that melted at every Diſtreſs; a Charity which not only thought no Evil, but ſuſpected none: and he exerciſed his Profeſſion with a Skill and Integrity, which nothing could equal, but the diſintereſted Motive that animated his Labours, or the amiable Modeſty which accompanied all his Virtues. He employed his Induſtry, not to gratify his own deſires; no Man indulged himſelf leſs: not to accumulate uſeleſs Wealth; no Man more diſdained ſo unworthy a Purſuit: it was for the decent Advancement of his Family, for the generous Aſſiſtance of his Friends, for the ready Relief of the Indigent. How often did he exert his diſtinguiſhed Abilities, yet

yet refuſe the Reward of them, in defence *of the Widow, the Fatherleſs, and of him that had none to help him!* In a Word, few have ever paſſed a more uſeful, not one a more blameleſs, Life; and his whole Time was employed either in doing Good, or in meditating it. He died on the 6th Day of April, 1743, and lies buried under the Cloiſter of Lincoln's Inn Chapel.

MEM. PAT. OPT. MER. FIL. DIC.

To the foregoing Character of the benevolent and truly pious Author of this invaluable Work, which was written by his worthy Son, we ſhall add the following Epitaph, inſcribed on a Stone under the Cloiſter above referred to.

 "Here

" Here lies the Body of
WILLIAM MELMOTH, Eſq.
Late one of the Senior Benchers
Of this Hon. Society, Who died
April the 6th, 1743, in the 77th
Year of his Age."

It will, alſo, we preſume, but be doing Juſtice to this excellent Treatiſe, and to the preſent Age, to inform the Reader, that, notwithſtanding many large Editions had before been circulated, not leſs than *Seventy Thouſand* Copies have been ſold within the laſt Twenty-five Years: a ſtriking Proof of the Degree of Eſtimation in which it is held by the Profeſſors of that Religion which was eſtabliſhed by the great Redeemer of Mankind, and of the Excellence of thoſe Precepts it inculcates.

THE

THE PREFACE.

THE Deſign of the following Treatiſe is, to awaken in the Minds of unthinking Men, a ſerious Senſe of Religion, and a true Concern for the Intereſt of their immortal Souls: a Deſign at all Times ſeaſonable and neceſſary, but more eſpecially at this Time, when we ſee ſuch Numbers of Perſons carried away with the immoderate Love of Pleaſure, and ſuch Arts invented to gratify their corrupt and vicious Inclinations.

Whoever reflects, with a due Concern, upon the Exceſſes and Debaucheries which have overſpread this Nation, and has any Regard for the Honour

Honour of God, and the Intereſt of that Holy Religion which Chriſt Jeſus came down from Heaven to eſtabliſh upon the Earth, will eaſily be perſuaded to think, that all Endeavours poſſible ought to be uſed to ſtem the Torrent of Wickedneſs which has broken in upon us, and to prevent the miſchievous Effects of thoſe *publick Diverſions* which the Generality of People are ſo fond of; I mean the *Maſquerades* and *Plays*. In thoſe Seminaries of Vice and Irreligion, every Thing is contrived to inflame the Paſſions and corrupt the tender Minds of young Perſons; and I am perſuaded, they have greatly contributed to that general Neglect of God and Religion which is ſo viſible among us.

Whether any Thing that is here offered will be effectual to draw Men off

off from the purſuit of thoſe *deceitful Vanities*, I cannot ſay; but ſure I am (if the Scripture is to be the Rule of our Practice, as moſt undoubtedly it is) it muſt be the Duty of every one, not only to take Care that he give no Encouragement, by his *Example*, to theſe licentious and enſnaring Entertainments, but to do what in him lies, to diſſuade others, eſpecially *thoſe under his Care*, from reſorting to *Places* of ſo much *Danger* and *Infection*.

It muſt be confeſſed, that it is no eaſy Matter to prevail on thoſe who are carried away by the falſe Maxims and Practices of a corrupt and debauched World, to renounce their ſenſual Gratifications for the more refined Pleaſures of Virtue and Religion; but the Difficulty of the Work ſhould not diſcourage the Attempt. I have

have therefore endeavoured, according to my Ability, to lay before the Reader the Advantages attending a good Life; in Hope, that whoever ſeriouſly conſiders what is urged in the following Pages, will be convinced there is no Pleaſure to be compared with that of a good Conſcience; and that Religion really is what it was deſigned by the great Author of it to be, the only ſolid Foundation of our preſent as well as future Happineſs.

I am ſenſible that what I ſhall offer hath been inculcated with much greater Advantage in many of thoſe excellent Diſcourſes which are already extant; yet, when I conſider how much Good hath been done by thoſe ſmall Tracts which have been printed and diſperſed of late Years,

I am

I am encouraged to hope that this little Treatiſe may prove of ſome Service; as a Check, at leaſt, to that inſatiable Thirſt of ſenſual Pleaſures, which ſeems to be the Diſeaſe of the preſent Age, and which muſt undoubtedly deſtroy the Love of God wherever it prevails.

I have added ſome Prayers at the End of this Book, not with an Intention to preſcribe to any one, but to aſſiſt thoſe who are not furniſhed with better Helps; well knowing how *important* a duty Prayer is, and how highly neceſſary it is for every good Chriſtian to be frequent in his Addreſſes to the Throne of Grace, if ever he expects the Favour of God, and hopes *to find* GRACE *to help him in Time of Need.*

May

May God of his great Goodneſs give a Bleſſing to theſe weak Endeavours, and make them inſtrumental to his Glory, and the Good of Souls!

THE

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

CHAP. I.

'WHAT ſhall I do to be ſaved?' was a queſtion which the trembling and aſtoniſhed jailer put to *Paul* and *Silas*, when he ſaw the priſon-doors opened in a miraculous manner; a queſtion of the utmoſt moment and importance, and which it nearly concerns us all to be well reſolved in. For, if there be a life after this, and we do not die like the *beaſts that periſh*; if death does not put a final period to our beings, but, when this ſhort life is ended, we enter

upon the regions of eternity, and ſhall be for ever happy or miſerable, according as we demean ourſelves in this ſhort time of trial and probation; if this be the ſtate and condition of mankind, (as the voice of reaſon, the dictates of conſcience, and the Holy Scriptures, do loudly proclaim it is,) how does it behove every one of us to enquire what we muſt do to attain everlaſting life; and to conſider whether we are in the way that leads to heaven and immortality! Or, if we have been ſo unhappy to wander out of it, how we may recover and return to it again!

This is an enquiry that deſerves our utmoſt diligence and attention. For if we are ignorant of the will of God, or, knowing it, will not follow or be led by that unerring light, but ſuffer

ſuffer ourſelves to be hurried away by our unruly paſſions in the purſuit of the things of this life, we are wretched and miſerable, blind and naked, notwithſtanding all our attainments; and we ſhall one day be convinced, to our ſorrow, that there is no folly like that of preferring things temporal to things eternal. Whatever *the children of this world* may think, and how much ſoever they may applaud their own wiſdom in contriving ſchemes to be rich and great, yet, if their chief care and concern is taken up about theſe things, it is certain they will be found *fools* when weighed in the balance of true wiſdom.

He that is truly wiſe, will conſider that he has a ſoul as well as a body to take care of; a ſpiritual and immortal ſubſtance, which can never die; but

when enlarged from that priſon in which it is now confined, muſt live for ever, either in happineſs or miſery. Shall we then be ſo fooliſh as to confine our ambitious purſuits within the narrow limits of this world, without conſidering what will be the condition of our ſouls hereafter? Shall we labour and toil for *the meat that periſheth*, and be cold and indifferent about the momentous concerns of eternity? Shall we ſpare no pains in order to increaſe our temporal eſtates, and to lay up *goods for many years*, when we know not, but *this night our ſouls may be required of us?* And if we have made no proviſion for their everlaſting welfare, what will it avail us that we have been rich and great in this world?

The faſhion of this world paſſeth away, and all the glory and ſplendour of

of it will in a little time have an end. How great then is the folly of that man, and how deplorable will his condition be, who, inſtead of *ſeeking the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs in the firſt place,* has conſumed his days in ſeeking after the honours and riches of this world, and has worn himſelf out in the purſuit of thoſe things which are of no value in the ſight of God? Wretched ſtupidity! *What ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?* MATTHEW xvi. 26. Time bears no proportion to eternity. The moſt exquiſite pleaſures of this life, which at beſt are but of a ſhort continuance, can never compenſate for the loſs of that happineſs which *God has prepared for them that love him.* How miſerably then will that man be deceived, who places all his

hopes and happineſs in the poor and empty ſatisfactions of a ſenſual life; who looks no farther than the preſent time; and lives as if he cared not what became of him hereafter, provided he may but enjoy *the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon!*

But ſome, perhaps, may aſk, Where is the man ſo abandoned to folly and madneſs, as to be content, for the ſake of a preſent ſhort-lived happineſs, to be miſerable for ever hereafter? I wiſh, indeed, there were none ſuch: but, alas! there are too many that make this ſad choice. Not that any one chooſes evil for the ſake of evil, or prefers miſery before happineſs, (for a deſire of happineſs is inſeparable from our nature;) but, in the Scripture account of things, he is ſaid to *chooſe* deſtruction who walks in the

the broad way that leads to it. For God has been pleaſed to *ſet before us life and death, bleſſing and curſing:* DEUT. XXX. 19.—Rewards on the one hand, to encourage our obedience; and puniſhments on the other, to deter us from ſin. As the man, therefore, who obeys the commandments of God chooſes *life*, ſo he that deliberately tranſgreſſes them chooſes *death;* that death which God has threatened to the ſinner, even *death eternal.* For the *wages of ſin is death;* and he that chooſes the one (let his pretences be what they may) muſt be ſaid to chooſe the other; becauſe he knows (at leaſt it is his own fault if he does not know) that *God will render to every man according to his deeds: To them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory and honour and immortality,*

eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man that doth evil. ROM. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

See, then, what a wretched piece of folly the ſinner is guilty of (how wiſe ſoever he may think himſelf, and how much ſoever he may deſpiſe the ſober part of mankind) when he firſt enters upon a life of wickedneſs. For he is then evidencing to all the world, that *life* and *death* being ſet before him, he has determined his choice to the latter: a choice ſo abſurd and unaccountable, that, did not experience convince us it is often made, we could hardly think it poſſible for a rational creature to be ſo blind. O, Bleſſed God! haſt thou ſet before us happineſs

happineſs and miſery, *Joys unſpeakable and full of glory*, on the one hand, and torments endleſs and intolerable on the other; haſt thou given us the light of reaſon to guide us, and ſuperadded that of thy Holy Spirit to illuminate and inſtruct us; haſt thou implanted in our natures a dread of, and averſion from, pain and miſery, and an inſatiable and never-ceaſing thirſt after happineſs; and is it poſſible for us, after all this, to be ſo blind and ſenſeleſs, ſuch enemies to our own ſouls, and ſo regardleſs of their eternal welfare, as to prefer the dark ways of ſin and miſery before thoſe bleſſed paths that lead to the bright regions of bliſs and glory! Alas! ſuch wretched fools are too many among us, who, notwithſtanding all that thou haſt done for us, will not harken, nor be adviſed, but run

head-long into the ways of ſin and deſtruction!

This, indeed, is a melancholy conſideration: and what ſhall we ſay to awaken men out of this fatal lethargy, and to inſpire them with a juſt ſenſe of their danger? what, but intreat them to conſider, that, *unleſs they repent, they will certainly periſh? For the wrath of God is revealed againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men: And* though *God winked at the times of ignorance,* yet *now he commandeth all men every where to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* ACTS xvii. 30, 31.—In that awful day, ſinners

will

will in vain call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For, when *the great day of his wrath is come, who ſhall* then *be able to ſtand?* REV. vi. 16, 17.— Who, indeed, ſhall be able to ſtand before the face of an incenſed God, and hear him pronounce that dreadful ſentence, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels?* Ah! who can bear an eternity of horror and deſpair? *who can dwell* with implacable fiends *in everlaſting burnings?* ISAIAH XXXiii. 14.

Theſe are conſiderations of infinite moment and concern, and ſufficiently ſhew us the great neceſſity of *denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and*

living righteouſly, ſoberly and godlily, in this preſent world. But, becauſe the weightieſt truths, when their conſequences are not immediately felt, are too apt to be diſregarded; I ſhall enlarge a little upon the great importance of a religious life, by endeavouring to prove theſe *three* things:

I. That there is no ſolid happineſs to be attained in this life, but in the practice of religion.

II. That as religion is the only thing that can make us happy while we live, ſo there is nothing but a good life can give us any comfortable proſpect when we come to die.

III. That a conſcientious obſervance of the duties of religion, will not only make us live happily and die comfortably;

comfortably; but, what is infinitely beyond all this, will moſt certainly be rewarded with eternal happineſs in the life to come.

Firſt, then, I ſhall endeavour to prove, *That there is no ſolid happineſs to be attained in this life but in the practice of religion.*

It has ever been the great artifice of the Devil, to poſſeſs the minds of unthinking men with an opinion that religion is a ſour, moroſe, ill-natured thing; an enemy to whatever is pleaſant and cheerful; and that whoever engages in the practice of it, muſt from that inſtant renounce all the pleaſures and enjoyments of this life. But, as the *Devil is the Father of Lies*, it is no wonder that he ſets every thing before us in a falſe and deceitful

deceitful light. It was by theſe means he deceived our firſt unhappy parents, and it is by the ſame methods he endeavours to betray their too credulous poſterity. He is continually repreſenting *evil as good, and good as evil; putting darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs.* He knows that there is ſuch a beauty and comelineſs in religion, as no one can behold it but with love and admiration; and therefore he endeavours to draw a veil over its luſtre, and to raiſe in in our minds frightful ideas concerning it. And too many, alas! are miſled by ſuch falſe and unjuſt repreſentations.

But would men be perſuaded once to make the experiment; would they forſake the dangerous paths of ſin, and walk in the way that leads to everlaſting

everlaſting happineſs; would they retire from the noiſe and tumult of a looſe and diſordered life, and liſten to the ſtill voice of reaſon and religion; they would quickly find how groſsly they have been cheated, and wonder how it was poſſible they ſhould ſo long have been deceived. They would ſoon diſcover, and then admire, *the beauty of holineſs*, and be thoroughly convinced that there is no pleaſure like that of a good conſcience; no real and ſolid happineſs but what reſults from a life of virtue and holineſs. They would then bleſs the happy change they had made, and would not part with their intereſt in heaven for the greateſt enjoyments this world could give them. All thoſe empty pleaſures which once captivated and enſnared them, would then appear mean and contemptible; and

and nothing would be thought of any real value, but what ſets them forward in the way of ſalvation.

O, happy man! (whoſoever thou be) that haſt made this noble trial, and, by a true and ſincere repentance, art reſtored to the favour and love of God! Thou haſt *turned away thine eyes from beholding vanity*, and canſt now look up with confidence to God, and reliſh the pleaſures of a virtuous life. How is thy mind filled with love and joy and admiration, when thou conſidereſt, that, by the grace and goodneſs of God, thou art reſcued out of the jaws of the devouring lion, and art delivered from fear and ſhame and ſelf-condemnation; the ſure and miſerable attendants of a guilty conſcience!

We

We may have ſome idea of the happineſs of ſuch a man, by conſidering what is the pleaſure of a redeemed captive when reſtored to his country, his liberty, and his friends; or of a mariner got ſafe to ſhore after a ſtorm, wherein he was every moment in expectation of being ſwallowed up by the deep. And yet it muſt be owned, the compariſon falls infinitely ſhort: for, what ſlavery is ſo great as that of a ſoul under the bondage and dominion of ſin? Or, what are the moſt terrible dangers of the ſea, when compared with thoſe to which the ſinner is continually expoſed?

But have not ſome, it may be aſked, made trial of religion, and yet have found no ſatisfaction therein; as may be concluded from their returning again to their former courſe of life?

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life? It is true, there are ſome inſtances (and ſad ones they are, God knows) of ſome, who, *after they have been once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, have yet fallen away,* and entered again into a life of ſin and debauchery. But has this been owing to a diſlike of religion? By no means; but rather to a want of care in not avoiding the company which has formerly ſeduced them; or to a forgetfulneſs, or at leaſt a neglect, of the vows and reſolutions they have made: or, it may be, they have fallen under ſome violent temptation, which they have not ſo vigorouſly reſiſted as they might and ought to have done. Inſtances, however, of this kind, I truſt, are but rare. Whereas, on the other hand, how many are there, who, having forſaken the

the company and converſation of the wicked, and having lamented the folly and madneſs of their paſt lives, have, from being the ſlaves of ſin and Satan, become the ſervants of God? Theſe will tell you, from their own experience, that they have found more true peace and ſatisfaction in conquering one vicious habit, than they ever met with in the moſt ſenſual enjoyment; that all their paſt ſinful pleaſures yield them now no other fruits, than thoſe bitter ones of ſhame and remorſe; and that in religion, on the contrary, they find ſuch a ſpring of comfort continually refreſhing their ſouls, as they would not part with for all this world can poſſibly give them; that they taſte ſuch a pleaſure in the ſervice of God, as makes them, with holy *David*, deſire *to dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of their lives*,

lives, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to viſit his temple; (PSALM xxvii. 4.) and, like him, eſteem it better to *be a door-keeper in the houſe of the Lord,* one of the meaneſt of God's ſervants, *than to dwell in the tents of ungodlineſs,* amid the delights and pleaſures of a wicked and deluded world.

In fact, nothing can give a man ſo exquiſite a ſatisfaction, as to reflect upon the actions of a well-ſpent life; to conſider that he has made God his friend, and ſecured an intereſt in the favour of Him who is the eternal ſource and fountain of all good; infinite in mercy and loving-kindneſs, as well as in power: not only able, but willing and ready, to help and aſſiſt him in all difficulties: a Being to whom he may have recourſe under every

every trial and temptation, under the greateſt calamities and troubles of life; to whom he may lay open all his wants and infirmities, pour forth all his ſorrows and afflictions, and may at all times with confidence look up, as being aſſured that he has a powerful interceſſor in heaven, *Jeſus Chriſt* the righteous, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins;* (COL. i. 14.) *and, who his able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* HEB. vii. 25.—I ſay, for a man to conſider theſe important truths; to think that he is anſwering the end of his creation; that he is doing the work for which he was ſent into the world; that he is become a *member of Chriſt, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven:*

ven: How muſt ſuch thoughts cheer and refreſh his ſoul with a ſolid, ſubſtantial, and laſting pleaſure! in compariſon whereof, all the vain and empty enjoyments of this world are as nothing.

But then, on the contrary, for a wicked man to reflect, that *the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil,* (PSALM XXXIV. 16.) and conſequently that he is in the number of thoſe againſt whom God has declared his diſpleaſure; that, inſtead of *working out his ſalvation with fear and trembling,* he is daily *heaping up to himſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath;* and though (it may be) he is now *cloathed with purple and fine linen, and fares ſumptuouſly every day;* though he may at preſent live in all the gaiety and ſplendour, the pomp and luxury, of a great fortune; yet

yet there will come a time (and, for aught he knows, it may not be many moments off) when he ſhall be ſtript of all his pleaſures and enjoyments, and want even *a drop of water to cool his tongue.* Surely, ſuch conſiderations as theſe muſt ſtrike the ſinner with horror and amazement, and, like *Belſhazzar*, when he ſaw the *hand-writing upon the wall*, make him tremble, even in the midſt of his greateſt mirth and jollity.

And can a man with ſuch impreſſions on his mind (and theſe, or ſomething like theſe, will be ſure to haunt the ſinner) be ſaid to be happy? Are the ſtings of conſcience, the terrors of an Almighty Judge, and the dreadful expectations of God's vengance, conſiſtent with a ſtate of ſatisfaction? Alas! the libertine may flatter himſelf as

as he pleaſes, and think to deceive others, by putting on an air of gaiety and pleaſantneſs; but, it is certain, his mind can never be long at reſt, while he carries about him a faithful monitor, that will be continually upbraiding him for his folly and madneſs; repreſenting to him the dangers to which he is expoſed; and croſſing him, as it were, in his way, while he is in full purſuit of his unlawful pleaſures. And though he may, perhaps, be able ſometimes to ſilence the voice of this troubleſome companion, by mere dint of noiſe and extravagance; yet, when his paſſions abate, (as they will not always bear to be upon the ſtretch,) and the man grows cool, he will find the upbraidings of his conſcience return upon him with the greater violence. The ſhame and anguiſh, the horror and confuſion, that he

he will then feel, will infinitely overbalance all the ſatisfactions he can meet with in the enjoyment of his ſinful pleaſures.

I own, indeed, this is not the caſe of every ſinner. A man, by a long courſe of wickedneſs, may arrive at ſuch an hardened ſtate, as to be incapable of any virtuous impreſſions; his ſoul may be ſeared, as it were, with an hot iron, and be fallen into ſuch a deep and fatal lethargy, as nothing, perhaps, ſhall be able to awaken it, till it comes to feel the very torments of the damned. But no one, I believe, will think this to be a ſtate of happineſs.

The truth is, if we conſider a wicked man with reſpect to this world only, abſtractedly from what will be

his portion hereafter, we ſhall find that there are many and great evils to which he is expoſed, beſide the torments of a guilty conſcience. Are not pains and aches, rottenneſs and diſeaſes, the natural effects of luſt and intemperance? Poverty and broken fortunes, the certain conſequences of pride and prodigality? Does not paſſion, and anger, and revenge, frequently expoſe men to miſchievous and many times fatal quarrels and contentions? Does not robbery, theft, and murder, bring upon others a ſhameful and untimely end? How many evils are there in the world, that are the immediate effects of mens' vices! *From whence comes wars and fightings among you?* ſays St. James: *come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members?* JAMES iv. 1.—And from the ſame fatal ſource are derived many of

of thoſe other evils and calamities which ſome men labour under. If we trace them to their original, we ſhall find them to be the natural fruits of mens' luſts and paſſions; to have proceeded from their covetous and ambitious deſires, and the gratification of their unruly luſts and appetites. Indeed, how can it be otherwiſe, if we conſider, *That the curſe of the Lord is in the Houſe of the wicked;* (PROV. iii. 33.) *and that evil purſueth ſinners?* PROV. xiii. 21.—How can any thing but miſery attend *him* who has provoked the anger of an Almighty God?

Let us now conſider what is the lot and portion of good men in this world; and whether the practice of virtue and righteouſneſs is not the moſt likely way to promote preſent as well as future happineſs, and to make

our pilgrimage here on earth a ſtate of tolerable eaſe and comfort.

Solomon had as much experience of the pleaſures of the world as ever man had, and tried as many ways to make himſelf happy as his heart could deviſe; having *kept nothing from his eyes that they deſired, nor with-held his heart from any joy*; (ECCLES. ii. 10.) and yet, when he came to caſt up the account, he found this to be the ſum of it, *that all was vanity and vexation of ſpirit.* Accordingly, when he is inſtructing his ſon in the ways of true happineſs, he adviſes him to *get wiſdom and underſtanding.* For *wiſdom,* ſays he, *is the principal thing: therefore get wiſdom; and with all thy getting, get underſtanding.* PROV. iii. 13.—And, as an encouragement to do ſo, he tells him, that *happy is the man that*

that findeth wiſdom, and the man that getteth underſtanding: For, the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of ſilver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. PROV. iii. 13, *&c.*—This wiſdom and underſtanding, which he recommends as a treaſure of ſo great value, is not *the wiſdom of this world* (for that is *fooliſhneſs with God*, 1 COR. iii. 19.) but it is *the wiſdom that cometh from above*, which will make us wiſe unto ſalvation: the wiſdom of living in the fear and love of God, and in a ſtrict obedience to his commandments. *The fear of the Lord*, ſays he, *is the begin-*

ning of wiſdom, and the knowledge of the holy is underſtanding. (PROV. ix. 10.) Or, as it is ſaid in JOB, *Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom; and to depart from evil is underſtanding.*

Behold, then, the excellency of religion! it not only ſecures to us a reverſion of endleſs happineſs, but makes our lives at preſent eaſy and delightful. The very paths of religion are pleaſant, as well as the end to which they lead. It is true, vice has its preſent pleaſures as well as virtue: but then there is this difference between them; the pleaſures of ſin are weak, ſhort-lived, and only varniſhed over; they begin and end almoſt in the ſame moment, and can never be purchaſed but at the expence of much ſucceeding trouble, ſhame and ſelf-condemnation.

nation. Whereas thoſe which reſult from a holy and religious life, are ſubſtantial, ſincere, ſteady, and ſecure; they leave no diſguſt upon the mind; no loathings and diſlike; are neither accompanied with ſhame, nor followed with remorſe or ſadneſs; thoſe bitter allays to all ſinful gratifications. "We may talk of pleaſures and en-"joyments, (ſays a *great Prelate* of "our Church;) but no man ever truly "found them till he became acquaint-"ed with God, and was made ſenſible "of his love, and partaker of his hea-"venly favours, and lived in an entire "friendſhip and communion with "him." No, certainly; religion is the only happineſs of a rational creature, the only thing that can give us any true and real ſatisfaction. All other pleaſures are, at beſt, but ſhort and tranſitory; but in religion we

find a delight and ſatisfaction which is ſolid, ſubſtantial, and laſting; a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflection.

" Whenever *(to uſe the words of another excellent Perſon)* an action " is good and virtuous, it is not only " natural, but carries with it a felicity " flowing from, and eſſential to, the " very nature of it. Paternal, conju- " gal, filial affection; are they not full " of delight? Juſtice, friendſhip, be- " neficence, all the offices of humani- " ty, and the whole train of virtues; " does not the exerciſe of them admi- " niſter the moſt ſincere and laſting " joy? The propenſity there is in us " toward them, and the ſatisfaction " there is in the doing of them, does, " in diſpoſitions not debauched, lead " moſt irreſiſtibly to the practice of " them.

"them. We have, when we are "about them, no boding, miſgiving "thoughts, no forbidding whiſpers, "no ſecret reluctancy: Comfort, com-"placency of mind, and a gratulating "conſcience, always accompany ſuch "actions."

What a perpetual ſource of joy and comfort is a good conſcience! It gladdens the heart, cheers and refreſhes, the ſoul, and fills the mind with a conſtant ſerenity and cheerfulneſs, which is infinitely to be preferred before the noiſy mirth of fools and madmen. He that is poſſeſſed of this ineſtimable jewel, has a treaſure greater than all the riches of the *Indies:* a treaſure which he always carries about with him, and which neither the malice of the Devil, nor the wickedneſs of men, can rob him of: and ſo long as he re-

tains this fund of joy and comfort, (as he may always do, unleſs he is wretchedly wanting to himſelf,) he can never be truly miſerable. For a good conſcience, as it gives a reliſh to all our outward enjoyments, ſo it abates and takes off the edge of the ſharpeſt affliction; and not only enables a man to bear up under preſent evils, but fortifies him againſt the dread and apprehenſion of future ones. It arms him with courage and reſolution, and gives him ſuch a firmneſs and preſence of mind, as makes him able to endure the greateſt ſhock. *Solomon* obſerves, that *the wicked flee, when no man purſueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.* PROV. XXVIII. 1.—And the Holy *Pſalmiſt* tells us, that a good man *ſhall not be afraid of any evil tidings; for his heart ſtandeth faſt, and believeth in the Lord.*

PSALM

PSALM cxii. 7.—*The Lord*, ſays he, *is my light and my ſalvation: whom then ſhall I fear? The Lord is the ſtrength of my life; of whom ſhall I be afraid?* (PSALM xxvii. 1.) *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy ſtaff comfort me.* PSALM xxiii. 4.—What, indeed, ſhould *he* fear whoſe ſoul is anchored upon the rock of ages; *who has the God of Jacob for his help; whoſe hope is in the Lord his God?* PSALM cxlvi. 5.—He knows that he is in the hands of a moſt gracious and merciful Father, and is fully perſuaded that *all things ſhall work together for good to them that love him.* He is aſſured, that *the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy to deliver their ſoul from death, and to*

keep them alive in famine. PSALM xxxiii. 18, 19.—And therefore he can rejoice in God, even in the midſt of trouble and affliction, when he conſiders, that as his afflictions come from the hands of a good and gracious Being, who *does not willingly afflict the children of men;* ſo he knows that *as the time is ſhort,* they can be of no long continuance, *and* that, if he makes a right uſe of them, *they will work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 2 COR. iv. 17.

See then the folly and madneſs of thoſe *that take not God for their ſtrength; but truſt to the multitude of their riches, and ſtrengthen themſelves in their wickedneſs,* (PSALM lii. 7,) and think by theſe means to be fortified againſt the evils of this life! Alas! there are numberleſs calamities,

ties, from which wealth and power can never ſhelter us: and therefore, if a man withdraws his truſt in God, and takes ſanctuary in the ſtrength of his wickedneſs, he will find himſelf miſerably miſtaken when the day of adverſity comes upon him. The weight of ſin, ſuperadded to that of temporal evils, is a burthen greater than any perſon is able to bear. It is certain, whatever the great ones of this world may think, nothing can alleviate the force of worldly troubles but a good life. It is *that*, and *that* only, which is a ſufficient counterpoiſe to balance the weight of any great affliction. Nothing elſe is ſufficient to ſupport a man in *the evil days of his pilgrimage*, and to ſuſtain his ſpirit under the ſeverer calamities of this life. All other experiments, how promiſing ſoever, will be found vain and ineffectual. The

conſciouſneſs

conſciouſneſs of having, in ſome meaſure, lived holily and unblameably, will make him look up with a cheerful aſſurance to the great Supporter of his being, enable him to ſee through the darkeſt clouds of ſorrow and affliction, and behold with an eye of faith that heavenly country to which he is travelling, and where he hopes ſhortly to arrive. And this, though it will not wholly remove the afflictions which God is ſometimes pleaſed, for wiſe and good ends, to ſend upon ſome men in this life, nor make us inſenſible of the pangs that attend them; yet it will mightily leſſen and enervate their force, and enable us to bear up under them with courage, and even cheerfulneſs. For, how ſtrong a conſolation muſt it be for a good man, under bodily pains, or grief of mind, to contemplate a ſtate where there

there ſhall be *no more ſorrow, no more pain, and where all tears ſhall be wiped* for ever *from his eyes!* Or, if he is under the preſſure of want and extreme neceſſity, how muſt it ſupport and relieve his ſinking ſpirits to conſider, that he has a Father in Heaven, *who will never leave him, nor forſake him,* (HEB. xiii. 5.) how *much* ſoever he may at preſent think fit to deprive him of outward comforts! And that there is no perſon in the world ſo great, ſo proſperous, or ſo happy, but that (having a little patience) he himſelf ſhall be more ſo!

The ſum of what I have ſaid upon this head is ſo elegantly expreſſed by the Author of an *Eſſay on the Omnipreſence of God,* that I believe I ſhall leave this reflection more ſtrongly upon my reader's mind, if I give him the

the words of that unknown, but excellent, perſon.

'How happy (ſays he, ſpeaking of the intercourſe there is between God and the ſouls of good men,) how 'happy is an intellectual being, who, 'by prayer and meditation, by virtue 'and good works, opens this communication between God and his 'own ſoul! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature 'looks black about him, he has his 'light and ſupport within him, that 'are able to cheer his mind, and bear 'him up in the midſt of all thoſe horrors which encompaſs him. He 'knows that his Helper is at hand, and 'is always nearer to him than any 'thing elſe can be which is capable 'of annoying or terrifying him. In 'the midſt of calumny or contempt, 'he

'he attends to that Being, who whiſ-
'pers better things within his ſoul,
'and whom he looks upon as his de-
'fender, his glory, and *the lifter-up*
'*of his head.* In his deepeſt ſolitude
'and retirement, he knows that he is
'in company with the greateſt of Be-
'ings; and perceives within himſelf
'ſuch real ſenſations of his preſence,
'as are more delightful than any
'thing that can be met with in the
'converſation of his *creatures.* Even
'in the hour of death he conſiders
'the pains of his diſſolution to be no-
'thing elſe but the breaking-down of
'that partition which ſtands between
'his ſoul and the ſight of that Being
'who is always preſent with him, and
'is about to manifeſt itſelf to him in
'fulneſs of joy.

'If

'If we would be thus happy, (to go on with the words of this pious author,) and thus ſenſible of our 'Maker's preſence, from the ſecret 'effects of his mercy and goodneſs, we 'muſt keep ſuch a watch over all our 'thoughts, that, in the language of 'the ſcripture, *his ſoul may have plea-'ſure in us:* we muſt take care not 'to grieve his Holy Spirit, but en-'deavour to make the meditations of 'our hearts always acceptable in his 'ſight, that he may delight thus to 'reſide and dwell in us. The light 'of nature could direct *Seneca* to this 'doctrine, in a very remarkable paſ-'ſage among his Epiſtles; *ſacer ineſt 'in nobis ſpiritus, bonorum malorum-'que cuſtos & obſervator; & quemad-'modum nos illum tractamus, ita & 'ille nos.* "There is a Holy Spirit "reſiding in us, who watches and "obſerves

" obſerves both good and evil men, " and will treat us after the ſame " manner that we treat him." But I ' ſhall conclude (ſays the ſame author) ' this diſcourſe with thoſe more em- ' phatical words in divine Revelation: ' *If any man love me, he will keep my* ' *word, and my Father will love him,* ' *and we will come unto him, and* ' *make our abode with him.*"

I have thus far conſidered the effects of a good life. *Firſt*, as it fills our minds with joy, and peace, and comfort, and delivers us from thoſe uneaſy reflections which haunt and torment the ſinner: And, *ſecondly*, as it is a means to ſecure us from thoſe evils which are the immediate conſequences of ſin; and ſupports us under ſuch afflictions as it pleaſes God, many times, to ſend upon good men in

in this world. I ſhall now conſider it with reſpect to ſome other advantages it hath above that of a wicked courſe of actions: and I truſt it will fully appear, that there is nothing ſo likely to ſecure a man's happineſs in this world, as a ſtrict obſervance of the precepts and duties of religion.

St. *Peter* lays it down as an undoubted truth, that whoſoever deſires to live happily, muſt live holily. *He that will love life*, ſays he, *and ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile; let him eſchew evil, and do good.* 1 PET. iii. 10, 11.—And the reaſon that temporal proſperity is ſo likely to be the lot and portion of the religious man is, becauſe *the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the*

the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil. 1 PET. iii. 12. and PSAL. xxxiv. 15, 16.—It is very evident, from the whole tenour of ſcripture, that the providence of God does very much intereſt itſelf in the care and ſupport of good men in this world. *O taſte and ſee,* (ſays the holy *Pſalmiſt,*) *how gracious the Lord is! Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him. O fear ye the Lord, ye that are his ſaints; for they that fear him lack nothing. The lions do lack, and ſuffer hunger; but they who ſeek the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good.* PSALM xxxiv. 8, 9, 10.—How remarkable are the words of the wiſe Son of *Sirach* to the ſame purpoſe! *Look at the generations of old* (ſays he;) *did ever any truſt in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forſaken? or whom did he*

he ever deſpiſe that called upon him? ECCLESIASTICUS ii. 10.—Add to this that obſervation of holy *David: I have been young, and now am old; yet ſaw I never the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread.* PSALM xxxvii. 25.—On the contrary, *I have ſeen* (ſays he) *the ungodly in great power, and flouriſhing like a green bay-tree: I went by, and, lo! he was gone: I ſought him, but his place could no where be found.* PSALM xxxvii. 36, 37.—The contemplation of this watchful providence of God over good men, made the devout *Pſalmiſt* reſolve and ſay, *I will always give thanks unto the Lord; his praiſe ſhall ever be in my mouth.* Ps. xxxiv. 1.

It is certain that God is a being of infinite purity and holineſs: and as he muſt therefore hate iniquity with the utmoſt

utmoſt abhorrence, ſo there is no doubt but a ſerious and conſcientious obſervance of the duties of religion will recommend a man to his favour and protection. He that *feeds the fowls of the air, clothes the graſs of the field,* and is of a nature ſo diffuſively bountiful, *as to make his ſun to riſe on the evil as well as on the good, and ſends his rain both on the juſt and unjuſt,* will undoubtedly, in a more peculiar manner, bleſs the labours of an honeſt and induſtrious man, and provide for thoſe that fear him and keep his commandments. I would not be underſtood to ſay, that never any wicked man hath proſpered, nor any good man been unſucceſsful in this world; it pleaſes God many times, for wiſe and good ends, to ſuffer the righteous to fall into great perplexities and diſtreſſes. However, ſince the Scriptures aſſure

aſſure us, that *the Lord will bleſs the righteous, and compaſs him with favor as with a ſhield;* (PSALM v. 12.) *that wealth and riches ſhall be in the houſe of him that feareth the Lord, and delighteth in his commandments:* (PSAL. cxii. 1, 3.) *that bleſſings ſhall be upon his head; that the houſe of the righteous ſhall ſtand, and the tabernacle of the upright ſhall flouriſh;* (PROVERBS x. 6.—xii. 7.—xiv. 11.) *that it ſhall be well with them that fear God;* (ECCLES. viii. 12.) and, in ſhort, that *Godlineſs hath the promiſe of the life that now is,* as well as *of that which is to come;* (1 TIM. iv. 8.) we may certainly conclude, that a ſtrict obſervance of the duties of the Chriſtian Religion is the moſt likely way a man can take to thrive and proſper in the world, and to make his life comfortable and happy.

And

And of this truth we may be convinced, not only from the teſtimony of Scripture, but from the reaſon and nature of things. For, let any one conſider, and tell me, whether he who is juſt and true in all his dealings, honeſt and ſincere in all his profeſſions, and faithful to his word and promiſes; who is diligent and induſtrious in his calling; who makes it his conſtant rule to do to all men as he would they ſhould do to him; and is ſo far from endeavouring to overreach and defraud his neighbour, that he chooſes rather to forego the greateſt gain, than purchaſe it at the expence of the leaſt injuſtice: I ſay, let any one tell me, whether it is not much more probable that ſuch a man ſhould enlarge his fortune in the world, than he that acts the very reverſe of all this; that practiſes all the arts of cheating

and lying, of over-reaching and circumvention, and ſtoops to every thing, how baſe and diſhoneſt ſoever, which he thinks will turn to his preſent profit; that conſiders not ſo much how honeſt and upright his actions are, as how profitable; and cares not what his neighbour ſuffers by his injuſtice, if he himſelf does but get by it? Such a man, when he comes to be known, (as he will not be able long to conceal himſelf,) will certainly loſe his credit and reputation; he will become hated and deſpiſed, and every perſon will be afraid to have any dealings with him. On the other hand, the honeſt and upright man (beſide the bleſſing of God, which he cannot fail of) will be ſure to meet with the love and eſteem of all that know him: he will have few, if any, enemies; but will have many friends, and thoſe ſome of the wiſeſt and

and beſt of men, who will be always ready to aſſiſt him, and glad of every opportunity of promoting his intereſt and happineſs.

2. Another great bleſſing of life, and which gives a reliſh to all other enjoyments, is *health:* And who is more likely to obtain this bleſſing than the religious man? For will not temperance, ſobriety, and virtue, (duties which he practiſes,) conduce more to a ſound and vigorous conſtitution of body, than ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, luſt and intemperance; the miſchievous effects of which are too viſible to be denied? *Who hath woe?* (ſaid *Solomon*) *who hath ſorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cauſe? who hath redneſs of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek mixed*

wine. PROV. xxiii. 29, 30.—What pains and diſeaſes have ſome men brought upon themſelves, merely by their exceſſes and debaucheries! Diſeaſes which have not terminated with their own lives, but have been entailed upon their unhappy poſterity! And how can it be otherwiſe, unleſs it ſhould pleaſe God to change the nature of things? For if men will run into thoſe exceſſes which inflame and corrupt their blood, it is no wonder that gout or dropſy, or ſome more immediately fatal diſtemper, ſhould proceed from ſuch diſorders. And when a vicious or debauched parent has brought rottenneſs into his own bones, though the children may be free from the vices of their father, yet they frequently feel all their lives the miſchievous effects of his tranſgreſſions.

3. Again,

3. Again, *a cheerful and contented mind* is another great bleſſing of life; for without it nothing in this world can make us happy. And by what means ſhall a man obtain this, but by the practice of religion? *That* will teach him to reſign his will to God, to ſubmit to all the diſpenſations of his providence, and to be patient and eaſy, cheerful and ſatisfied, under every diſappointment and trouble he may meet with; as knowing that God is the ſovereign diſpoſer of all things; a being of infinite goodneſs, kindneſs, and love; that *he does not willingly afflict the children of men*, but makes *every thing work together for good to them that love him.* And how quiet, eaſy, and contented, muſt ſuch a man be under all events! He has learned, with *St. Paul, how to abound, and how to want*; and as he is not puffed

up with the one, ſo neither is he caſt down when it pleaſes God to ſend the other; but goes through the world with a calm, even, and contented mind, undiſturbed by that inquietude, impatience, and diſcontent, from which a proud, envious, and ambitious man is ſeldom, if ever, free.

4. *Peace* is another great bleſſing, highly conducive to the happineſs of life: and to this the religious man has the juſteſt claim. He conſiders that *if God ſo loved us, as to ſend his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins, we ought alſo to love one another;* (1 JOHN iv. 10, 11.) and therefore he is an enemy to no man, but kind, and good-natured, and obliging to all; and if any perſon is ſo unreaſonable as to reward him *evil for good*, (as the *Pſalmiſt* complains ſome had done to himſelf,)

himſelf,) yet, in imitation of his bleſſed Saviour, whoſe example he continually ſets before him, he does *good to them that hate him, and prays for them that deſpitefully uſe him, and perſecute him.* MATT. v. 44.—*When he is reviled, he reviles not again; when he ſuffers, he threatens not, but committeth himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* 1 PETER ii. 23.—He reſolves, as St. *Paul* adviſes, *to put away all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking, with all malice;* (EPHE. iv. 31.) and endeavours to attain that *Wiſdom* which is *from above;* which is *firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits.* JAMES iii. 17.—This principle of love, and charity, and good will to mankind, as it renders the mind quiet and eaſy, calm and com-

poſed; ſo it makes a man not only happy in himſelf, but a bleſſing and comfort to all about him; and conſequently attracts the love, eſteem, and admiration, of all thoſe that ſee and feel the kind and benign influences of ſo divine a temper. *Great peace* (ſays the *Pſalmiſt*) *have they which love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* PSALM cxix. 165—And the *Prophet* aſſures us, *That the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace; and the effects of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.* Is. xxxii. 17.

But now, on the other hand, the life of an angry and revengeful man is all ſtorm and tempeſt: he is *like a troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.* ISAIAH lvii. 20.—He is a ſtranger to peace, and all the bleſſed fruits and effects of

of it; for, where *envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every evil work.* JAMES iii. 16.—His mind is continually reſtleſs and uneaſy, agitated to and fro with the violent force of unruly paſſions, which lead him on from one evil to another, and frequently hurry him into thoſe that are of a very miſchievous conſequence. What miſery and torment muſt a man feel, who is poſſeſſed with a ſpirit ſo directly contrary to that of the goſpel! How little can he taſte of the true happineſs of life, whoſe mind is always diſcordant and out of tune! He may, perhaps, *poſſeſs* a great deal of the good things of this world, but can have very little enjoyment: for, what comfort can he find from any thing who has no peace in his own mind; who is at enmity with himſelf, and with almoſt every one elſe; and is capable

of being put out of humour by every trifling, croſs accident? Is it poſſible for a man of ſuch a temper to be happy, even in the midſt of the greateſt proſperity? No, certainly: it is the meek-ſpirited that our Saviour hath pronounced *bleſſed: they ſhall inherit the earth,* (MATT. v. 5.) *and be refreſhed* (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks) *in the multitude of peace,* and ſhall find a real comfort in whatever they poſſeſs; which, though it ſhould happen to be but little, yet, being enjoyed in peace and quiet, and with a contented mind, will undoubtedly yield them a much greater and truer ſatisfaction, than a man of a contrary diſpoſition can reap from large poſſeſſions and ample revenues.

5. I ſhall mention but one advantage more which a good man has above

above a wicked one as to this world; and that is, in reſpect of *dutiful and obedient children;* which is allowed by all to be a great bleſſing in itſelf, and is what the former has much more reaſon to expect and hope for than the latter. For, if it pleaſes God to bleſs a good man with children, he begins very early to inſtil into their tender minds the principles of virtue and religion: he teaches them to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth;* and brings them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. He ſets before them, in his own conduct, the example of a holy and religious life; and endeavours to wean them from the pride and vanity of the world, and from thoſe hurtful luſts and paſſions which tend only to make them miſerable both here and hereafter. He inſtructs them in that

knowledge which is uſeful and profitable, which will give them a right underſtanding of themſelves and of their duty, and make them wiſe unto ſalvation: and, when the grace of God co-operates with theſe endeavours, (as it will not fail to do,) what comfortable hopes may not ſuch a parent entertain of reaping the happy fruits of all his labours! Inſtead of looking upon his children with grief and trouble, and having his grey hairs, by their means, brought down with ſorrow to the grave; how much rather may he expect to behold them with pleaſure and delight, when he ſees them as ſo many *Olive-branches round about his table*, fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge and love of God?

There is no perſon, I believe, but will allow, that this is the moſt likely way

way a man can take to be happy in his children: and though it ſhould not prove effectual, (for ſucceſs is not in our own power,) yet of this he may be aſſured, that his pious and ſincere endeavours to train up his children in a ſober, honeſt, and religious courſe of life, will certainly recommend him to the favour and love of God; as is manifeſt from the great regard God expreſſed for *Abraham* on this very account. *And the Lord ſaid, ſhall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; ſeeing that Abraham ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath*

hath ſpoken of him. GENESIS xviii. 17, 18, 19.—This is a great encouragement to parents to be very careful in the education of their children: they are making proviſion for their own happineſs at the ſame time that they are endeavouring to ſecure that of their children. But, ſhould they be diſappointed in theſe their pious endeavours, they are laying up in ſtore a good foundation of comfort, to themſelves at leaſt, againſt the day of trouble: I mean, if it ſhould pleaſe God that they ſhould live to ſee their children wicked and miſerable, notwithſtanding all the means they have uſed to make them otherwiſe. For they will then have the conſolation to reflect that they are clear from the guilt of their childrens' ſins; and will be free from thoſe bitter ſelf-reproaches that a wicked man muſt make,

make, who ſees his children ruined by thoſe vices and follies which his example hath taught them, or his careleſſneſs and neglect ſuffered them to fall into. Bitter reproaches, I ſay, thoſe muſt undoubtedly be, which ſuch a parent will make to himſelf, when he conſiders that he has his childrens' ſins, as well as his own, to account for; and applies to himſelf (as he juſtly may) thoſe dreadful words which God ſpake to the prophet *Ezekiel: When I ſay unto the wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die, and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to ſave his life; the ſame wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hands.* EZEKIEL iii. 18.—O terrible words of moſt juſt judgment! How dreadful muſt they ſound in the ears of

of a wicked parent, whoſe children have periſhed through his fault!

I have now conſidered ſome of thoſe duties to which religion obliges us, and endeavoured to ſhew how conducive they are to our temporal happineſs; by which, I hope, it ſufficiently appears, how much good men have the advantage of the wicked even as to this world. And here I cannot but take notice of the wonderful love of God to mankind, who, in order to encourage our obedience to his laws, has annexed a preſent, as well as future, reward to a good life; and has ſo interwoven our duty and happineſs together, that, while we are diſcharging our obligations to the one, we are, at the ſame time, making the beſt proviſion for the other.

How

How much then do they derogate from the honour of God, who repreſent religion as an unprofitable and unpleaſant taſk! When it is plain to any man, that conſiders things rightly, and is not under the prejudice of his luſts and paſſions, that the great deſign of religion is to make us happy here, as well as hereafter. Accordingly, all its rules and precepts are ſo admirably ſuited to this end, that, would men be perſuaded to live in the practice of them, we ſhould find this world a kind of heaven upon earth.

But, had the practice of our duty been ever ſo irkſome and uneaſy, and had nothing but trouble and miſery been the lot of good men in this world; yet, when we conſider that this life will ſhortly have an end, and that

that there is an *eternal weight of glory* reſerved in heaven for thoſe that truly love and ſerve God; what wiſe man would not prefer the rugged paths of virtue and religion, which he knows will ſhortly lead him into an eternity of bliſs and happineſs, to the ways of ſin and wickedneſs, (how pleaſant ſoever he might find them,) where he is in danger every moment of falling into the pit of deſtruction, and which, he is ſure, will, in a little time, bring him into a place of endleſs miſery and torment?

But, ſince there is nothing in religion but what tends to make our lives eaſy, cheerful and contented; nothing but what is ſuitable to our natures, and agreeable to the dictates of right reaſon; nothing but what will ennoble our minds, enlarge our underſtandings,

derſtandings, and inſpire us with a generous principle of univerſal love, and charity, and good-will, to mankind; in ſhort, ſince *the commands of God are not grievous*, but his *yoke is eaſy, and his burthen light*; it manifeſtly follows, that, as a good life is the higheſt wiſdom, ſo a wicked one is the extreme of folly and madneſs.

PRAYER.

A PRAYER.

O MOST gracious God! who, out of thy great love and tender regard for mankind, haſt ſet before us life and death, bleſſing and curſing; and haſt endowed us with a freedom of will, and liberty to chooſe the one, and avoid the other; and, to encourage us to make a right choice, haſt annexed a preſent as well as future reward to our obedience to thy laws, and made the ways of religion ways of pleaſantneſs, and all its paths to be peace; O give me wiſdom and underſtanding, that I may not be carried away by the deceitful pleaſures of this world; but may ſee, and know, and chooſe, the things which make for my peace, and wherein

wherein my true and only happineſs doth conſiſt.

Convince me more and more, that ſin is the greateſt of all evils; that guilt and miſery are always inſeperable; and that there is no other ſolid and ſubſtantial happineſs to be attained in this life, but that which reſults from the teſtimony of a good conſcience, and the hopes of thy favour and acceptance: and grant that theſe momentous truths may be ſo deeply impreſſed upon my mind, that I may make it the ſincere endeavour of my whole life to pleaſe and obey Thee, who art my ſovereign good and happineſs; the only ſure foundation of all my hopes both here and hereafter; and in compariſon of whoſe favour, all the honours, riches, and enjoyments of this world, are as nothing.

Deliver

Deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from the ſhame and anguiſh, the horror and confuſion, of a guilty conſcience; and give me that comfort and complacency of mind, which ariſes from the conſciouſneſs of having been faithful in thy ſervice, and obedient to thy will. And, ſince thou haſt been graciouſly pleaſed to make thy ſervice the moſt perfect freedom, and the practice of our duty ſo conducive to our preſent as well as future well-being, O make me ſtedfaſt and immoveable in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that, having faithfully ſerved thee in this life, I may at laſt be found meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, through the ſole merits and interceſſion of our eternal advocate and mediator Jeſus Chriſt. Amen!

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

IN the foregoing Chapter I have endeavoured to ſhew, that religion is the only ſolid foundation of happineſs in this world; the only thing that can make us paſs the time of our pilgrimage here on earth with any tolerable eaſe and ſatisfaction. I ſhall now, proceed, in the next place, to conſider the great advantage of a good life, from the comfortable proſpect it gives us when we come to die.

And this is an advantage peculiar to virtue and religion, and to which a life of ſin and wickedneſs never pretended. The moſt which *that* promiſes its votaries, is to regale their ſenſes for a little while: it gives them no hopes beyond the grave; nor aims at

at any thing farther than a ſhort-lived happineſs. *When a wicked man dieth, his expectations ſhall periſh.* PROV. xi. 7.—*For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained* all that this world can give him, *when God taketh away his ſoul?* JOB xxvii. 8. All his enjoyments are then at an end; and thoſe ſchemes upon which he has built his happineſs, will vaniſh and come to nothing. But with a good man it is far otherwiſe: he looks beyond this preſent life, and beholds with an eye of faith the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the *city of the living God;* that place of endleſs bliſs and happineſs, which God has prepared for them that love him. In the hopes and expectations of this happineſs, he conſiders himſelf *as a pilgrim and a ſtranger upon earth;* and is daily endeavouring, through the aſſiſtance of God's

God's Holy Spirit, by a life of virtue and righteouſneſs, to become meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.

It muſt, indeed, be owned, that death is the great king of terrors; that the diſſolution of ſoul and body, and the thoughts of becoming a prey to the devouring worms, carries in it ſomething very ſhocking to human nature; yet to a good man, death appears in a quite different view. He conſiders, that to leave this world is only to quit a place of trouble and vexation, of vanity and emptineſs: it is to leave *a barren and dry wilderneſs where no water is*, for the delightful regions of bliſs and happineſs, where are rivers of pleaſure, and a never-ceaſing ſpring of endleſs comfort, which will ſatisfy the moſt longing

deſires of the ſoul. He conſiders that *though this earthly tabernacle is diſſolved, yet he has a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;* and is aſſured with *Job, that his Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and that, though his body be deſtroyed, yet in his fleſh* he *ſhall ſee God, whom* he *ſhall ſee for* himſelf, *and* his *eyes ſhall behold, and not another's.* JOB xix. 25, 26, 27.

This is what Religion promiſes to them *who, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality.* It is the hopes and expectations of this unſpeakable happineſs, that fortify the mind of a good Chriſtian, and give him a courage and reſolution which even death itſelf ſhall not be able to ſhake.

It

It was this that gave holy *David* ſuch a firmneſs of mind, as made him ſay, *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy ſtaff comfort me.* Ps. xxiii. 4. He had made God his portion, his hope, and his truſt. *The Lord* (ſays he) *is my ſtony rock and my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will truſt, my buckler, the horn alſo of my ſalvation.* Ps. xviii. 2. And though we find him ſometimes complaining, *that the ſorrows of death had compaſſed him, and the overflowings of ungodlineſs made him afraid; that the pains of hell came about him, and the ſnares of death overtook him;* yet the great confidence he had in the goodneſs and love of God, and the firm belief of a better life after the preſent, overcame all his fears. *I had fainted,*

(ſays he,) *but that I verily believe to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.* PSALM XXVII. 13.

Religion has been the ſupport of good men in all ages. It is certain, whoever leans upon any thing elſe, will find that he truſts to a broken reed, which will bend under him. There is nothing, (as I have obſerved in the former Chapter,) but the teſtimony of a good conſcience, and the hopes of the favour and love of God, that is able to bear a man up under the weight and preſſure of any great calamity; much leſs will any thing elſe be a ſufficient ſupport at the hour of death. We ſhall *then* be ſtript of all the pleaſures and enjoyments of this world, of all thoſe things in which we are now apt to place ſo great a confidence; and, unleſs we are fortified

fied *with a ſhield of faith, and the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs;* unleſs we have *put on the Lord Jeſus,* and are cloathed with the robes of his righteouſneſs; we ſhall be left naked and defenceleſs, to encounter death with all its terrors. The ſinner, how much ſoever he may now *truſt in the multitude of his riches,* and *ſtrengthen himſelf in his wickedneſs,* muſt *then* give up all his dependencies, and deſcend into the regions of darkneſs, not only without hope, but (what is yet more terrible) with dreadful expectations. Of what infinite moment then is it to us all, ſo to live, that *when the time appointed for our great change ſhall come,* we may meet death without fear and aſtoniſhment; and, with an humble confidence, may look up to God, in an aſſured hope of his mercy in Chriſt Jeſus!

A good life is, indeed, the ſure pledge of a happy death. As it fills our minds with joy and ſatisfaction while we live, far ſurpaſſing all the pleaſures of ſenſual gratifications; ſo, when we come to die, it gives us that *peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding*. When a man, in his laſt hour, can look back upon a life well ſpent, and can ſay, with king *Hezekiah*, *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight*; (ISAIAH xxxviii. 3.) what an unſpeakable ſatisfaction muſt it be to him! how mild and calm will death *then* appear! and with how little concern will he receive its ſummons! With what chearfulneſs will he *then* take leave of this world, and all that was dear to him in it! And how contentedly

edly will he quit his earthly tabernacle, when he conſiders, that he is to exchange it for a *building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!* I ſay, what an unſpeakable comfort muſt it be to a dying man, when he is entering into the *valley of the ſhadow of death*, to have before him a bright proſpect of life and glory; to find the light of God's countenance ſhining upon his mind, and the comforts of his holy ſpirit chearing and refreſhing his ſoul; to be able to look up to God with a filial confidence, and, with a *hope full of glory and immortality*, to reſign his ſoul into the hands of his Maker; not doubting but his heavenly Father, whom he has faithfully ſerved in this world, will take care of him, and reward him, in the next; and that the ſame infinite power and goodneſs,

which has carried him ſafe through this *vale of tears and miſery*, will conduct him in his paſſage to a bleſſed eternity! O, how far more happy muſt the death of ſuch a one be, than the moſt envied ſtate of the greateſt mortal! Who would not wiſh *to die the death of the righteous, and that his laſt end may be like his!* Eſpecially,

If we conſider, in the next place, the miſerable condition of a wicked man when death approaches. But how ſhall I deſcribe the agonies and convulſions of mind which a deſpairing ſinner labours under in his laſt hour! Who can expreſs the anguiſh and torment that *he* feels who is under the terror of death and damnation! *The ſpirit of a man* (ſays *Solomon*) *will ſuſtain his infirmity; but a wounded*

a wounded ſpirit who can bear? PRO. xviii. 14.—The moſt exquiſite pains and torments of the body are nothing compared with what a dying ſinner feels from the ſtings of his guilty conſcience. With what ſhame and confuſion does he *then* look back upon the actions of his paſt life! How does he tremble, and ſtand confounded, at the remembrance of thoſe ſins which, were once the darling objects of his guilty deſires! And what an horrible dread overwhelms his mind, when he conſiders that he is entering upon that unchangeable ſtate from which he knows there is no redemption! that he is going to give an account of a life, which he cannot reflect upon without horror and amazement, and for which he is juſtly afraid he ſhall, in a few moments, be conſigned to endleſs miſery and torments! How

does he condemn himſelf, when his conſcience reproaches him for having ſpent that time inſignificantly or wickedly, which was given him for noble and excellent purpoſes; that he has neglected the great and important work of his ſalvation, and been deaf to all the calls and invitations of God's holy ſpirit; that, inſtead of laying up in ſtore a good foundation of hope and comfort againſt the day of trouble, which is now come upon him, he has heaped up to himſelf a dreadful load of guilt, which is ready to ſink him with its intolerable weight!

O, wretched man! what would'ſt thou give, were it in thy power, to recall thoſe precious moments which thou haſt laviſhed away in ſin and vanity! How doſt thou wiſh that thou *hadſt known* in time *the things that belong*

belong to thy peace! But, alas! *they are now hidden from thine eyes;* and nothing is left but darkneſs and deſpair.

But let us ſuppoſe the life of a dying perſon not to have been ſo flagrant and vicious as to fill his mind with ſuch black and deſpairing thoughts; yet, if, upon the review of it in his laſt hour, he finds in it ſuch a mixture of good and evil, that he is in great doubt and uncertainty concerning his eternal welfare, how ſad and diſconſolate muſt his condition even *then* be! and what a dreadful anxiety will he labour under, when he conſiders, that he is leaving this world, and going he knows not whither; that he is juſt launching out into the boundleſs ocean of eternity, and that the next moment he may ſink into the terrible abyſs of endleſs miſery and torment!

It is, without all queſtion, a moſt diſtreſsful circumſtance to be doubtful of a matter, of which it ſo nearly concerns us to have ſome highly probable aſſurance.

O, that men would be perſuaded ſeriouſly to think on theſe things! That they would *be wiſe, and conſider their latter end!* (DEUT. xxxii. 29.) and (as the *Pſalmiſt* adviſes) would *keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right! for that*, and that only, *ſhall bring a man peace at the laſt.* PSALM xxxvii. 37.—And who is there ſo ſtupid that would not wiſh for ſo invaluable a bleſſing? What wiſe man would not rather ſubmit to the worſt that could befall him here in a *ſhort* life, than run the leaſt riſque of going out of this world under the terrors of a guilty conſcience? It is (whatever

(whatever thoſe, who are carried away by their luſts and paſſions, may think,) it is the utmoſt wiſdom of man to prepare for his latter end, by conducting himſelf according to the will of his great Creator: for it is certain (however ſome may vainly flatter themſelves) there is no leaving this world with any tolerable compoſure, unleſs our lives have been ſuch as, through the tender mercies of God, and the merits of Chriſt Jeſus, to give us a reaſonable hope that we may be found in the number of thoſe whom our great Judge ſhall at the laſt day pronounce *bleſſed*. But this can only be the lot and portion of the righteous; for how can any one, whoſe life has been a direct contradiction to the will of God, entertain hopes of his favour? Perhaps, when he ſees death approaching, he may lament and bewail

wail the folly of his paſt conduct, and, *with ſtrong crying and tears*, reſolve upon a new courſe of life, if it ſhould pleaſe God to ſpare him. But, ſince the goſpel hath no where aſſured us, that God will accept of a death-bed repentance, or be reconciled to a ſinner who (after having lived a wicked and careleſs life, and been deaf to all the calls and invitations of the Holy Spirit, the threatenings of the Goſpel, and the checks of his own conſcience) ſhall at the laſt, when he is able to gratify his luſts no longer, and begins to fear the ſad conſequences of his ſins, cry out for mercy, and wiſh that he had been wiſe in time: I ſay, ſince God has no where revealed, that he will accept of any repentance which is not followed by a thorough change and amendment of life, and a ſincere obedience to his commandments; and

ſince

ſince it is impoſſible for a dying ſinner to bring forth ſuch fruits of repentance; how precarious muſt *his* hopes be, that are built upon ſo uncertain a foundation!

It is true, to repent is all that a man, who has led a wicked life, can do, when he comes to die; and it would be well, for his own ſake, and for the ſake of his ſorrowful friends and relations, that he would do this much, and not go out of the world hardened and inſenſible: for who knows how far infinite mercy may be extended? But, ſurely, it muſt be the greateſt inſtance of folly and madneſs, to hazard a matter of ſuch infinite moment upon ſo uncertain an iſſue; upon a few broken, confuſed, and almoſt deſpairing ſighs and groans: for, if the remorſe and horrors, the

ſolemn

ſolemn vows and reſolutions, of ſuch men ſhould not prove a true godly ſorrow, *a repentance to ſalvation, not to be repented of,* (as no man can ſay they certainly will,) they are loſt and undone to all eternity.

But ſuppoſe we could be aſſured that a death-bed repentance would be effectual; yet who can tell whether a man may have time for that work in the hour of death? Or, if he could be certain that a lingering ſickneſs would put an end to his days, yet how does he know that God will then vouchſafe him the grace of repentance? and without *that* grace it is impoſſible he ſhould repent. O how much rather may ſuch a one fear, leſt God ſhould be ſo provoked, by his many wilful refuſals to hearken to the calls and admonitions of the Holy

Holy Spirit, as to cut ſhort his day of grace, and deliver him over to a hardened and reprobate mind!

The Scripture aſſures us, that there is a time when men ſhall call upon God, and he will not harken. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed: I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation; and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you. Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they will ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord: they would none*

of

of my counſel. They deſpiſed all my reproof; therefore ſhall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. PROVERBS i. 24, &c.—The end of the long-ſuffering and forbearance of God is *to lead men to repentance;* ROM. ii 4. but if, inſtead of producing that bleſſed effect, it only hardens them in their ſins, and makes them reſolve to go on in their wicked courſes, vainly preſuming they ſhall repent when they come to die; how juſt may it be in God to leave them at their laſt hour under all the terrors and agonies of a fearful death! *to laugh at their calamity, and to mock when their fear cometh!*

O conſider this, all ye that forget God, leſt he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you. Conſider it in due

due time, before it be too late, before the dreadful hour comes upon you, when all opportunities of reconciling yourſelves to your offended God ſhall be taken from you, and the door of hope ſhall be for ever ſhut. Silence the clamour of your paſſions, and liſten to the threatenings of God's holy word, the admonitions of his bleſſed ſpirit, and the checks of your own conſciences. Be perſuaded to ſet about the great work of your ſalvation *to day, while it is called to day, before the night cometh when no man can work.* Remember, that though you are now, perhaps, in health and ſtrength, in the prime and vigour of your years, ſurrounded with the pleaſures of a great and ſplendid fortune; yet the time is coming, and (whether you think of it or not) is haſtening on apace, when you muſt take your leave of all that

that is deſirable upon earth. Nothing will *then* ſtand you in any ſtead but a good conſcience; neither honours, nor riches, nor any thing elſe that men are now ſo fond of, will *then* be able to give you one moment's eaſe, or afford you one comfortable thought. Nothing will be *then* regarded but the conſciouſneſs of having in ſome meaſure anſwered the end for which God ſent you into the world; by having lived in the fear and love of God, *and in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity having had your converſation in this world.*

It was this that made St. *Paul* deſire *to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt:* for, he had *fought a good fight, and kept the faith.* And therefore he could ſay with great aſſurance, when *The time of his departure was at hand,* that

that there was laid up for him a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhould give him at that day. 2 TIM. iv. 7, 8.—And it was this that made a late pious Divine of our church, when he was near his death, utter theſe remarkable expreſſions: 'I am entering upon my 'laſt labour: the Lord gave, and he 'is now taking away; bleſſed be the 'name of the Lord! for, I thank my 'God, I am going without any diſ-'truſt, without the leaſt miſ-giving, 'to a place of reſt, and joy, and ever-'laſting bliſs. There is no life like a 'happy death. I have endeavoured, 'even from my youth, to approve 'myſelf a faithful ſervant to my great 'Maſter. I have taken ſome pains in 'writing ſeveral books; I have ſeri-'ouſly conſidered them; and am ful-'ly ſatisfied (looking on thoſe about him)

him) that you may find in them the 'way to heaven. The Chriſtian du-'ties contained therein have been my 'practice, as well as ſtudy; and now 'I find the advantage of it. And 'therefore be careful to read them 'often and ſeriouſly; and live ſuitably 'thereunto, that, when you come to 'the condition I am now in, you may 'die with comfort, as you ſee me do. 'I have ſome little pain, indeed; but 'my pain is nothing ſo extraordinary 'as my hopes; for, I have earneſtly 'repented of all my ſins; and verily 'believe that, through the tender mer-'cies of my God, and the merits of 'my Bleſſed Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, I 'ſhall be carried up into *Abraham's* 'boſom.' After which, it is ſaid, he made this ſhort Prayer. 'I wait, O 'God, for that everlaſting reſt which 'I want at preſent, but ſhall not long.

'I am

'I am ready when thou, my God,
'calleſt for me; yet can ſtay with pa-
'tience till thou pleaſeſt: for thy time
'is the beſt time, and thy pleaſure the
'beſt pleaſure.'

See here the end of a good man. How calm, how ſerene and comfortable is his death! Is there any thing like *this* in the caſe of a wicked man in the hour of his diſſolution? Alas! no. If you behold ſuch a perſon in his laſt extremity, (unleſs he die hardened and impenitent,) you will hear little elſe but bitter reflections, ſad bewailings, wretched upbraidings of himſelf, for the folly and madneſs of his paſt life; together with deſpairing ſighs and groans, black and dreadful to himſelf, and very terrible to all about him. May God, of his infinite mercy, keep every one from ſuch a dreadful hour!

and

and teach us all ſo to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wiſdom; that *true* wiſdom, which will make us wiſe unto ſalvation, fill our minds with comfort and ſatisfaction while we live, and, what is of infinitely more value, give us, when we come to die, *that peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding,* through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. Amen!

A PRAYER

A PRAYER.

O MOST great and mighty God! in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life and death! Thou ordereſt all things by thy infinite power and wiſdom, and haſt appointed for all men once to die; and, after this ſhort life is ended, haſt, of thy infinite goodneſs, provided for thy faithful ſervants a ſtate of endleſs bliſs and happineſs. O! make me truly ſenſible of the frailty and uncertainty of my life; and teach me ſo to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto true wiſdom. Let not death ever ſurprize me unawares, or find me in a ſtate unprovided. But grant that I may live in ſuch a conſtant preparation for my latter end, that, how ſuddenly ſoever thou ſhalt be pleaſed to take

me out of this world, I may be found ready and prepared for that great account, which I muſt one day give before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. Enable me, by the aſſiſtance of thy grace and holy ſpirit, to finiſh the great work of my ſalvation before the night comes, when no man can work, and to lay a good foundation of hope and comfort againſt the hour of my death; that, when the time of my departure ſhall come, I may look back upon a well-ſpent life with joy and comfort, and may meet death without fear.

Look upon me, O moſt gracious God, when the time of my diſſolution draws nigh, as a reconciled Father in Chriſt Jeſus. Speak peace unto my conſcience, and ſay unto my ſoul, 'I am the God of thy ſalvation.' Let not the cruel enemy of ſouls affrighten me with his terrors; but

but give thy holy angels charge over me, to keep me out of his hands; and let the comforts of thy Holy Spirit cheer and cheriſh my ſoul in its paſſage through this vale of tears and miſery to a happy eternity.

O Lord! leave me not to myſelf in that time of diſtreſs, when I ſhall ſtand in ſo much need of thee. Confirm my faith; ſupport me in my dying agonies; and forſake me not when my ſtrength faileth. Let thy merciful ears, O God, be then open to my prayers; and ſpare me, O Lord moſt holy, O God moſt mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou moſt worthy Judge eternal! ſuffer me not at my laſt hour, through any pains of body, or weakneſs of mind, to renounce my dependence upon thee. But grant, O merciful Father, that, with an humble reliance on thy

mercies, and the infinite merits of my dear Redeemer, and with an entire ſubmiſſion to thy bleſſed will, I may cheerfully reſign up my ſoul into thy hands, and may be willing, and even deſirous, to leave this world, when thou, my God, in thy great wiſdom, ſhalt ſee it fitting.

O Lord! let me never be ſeparated from thee; but grant that my ſoul may be ſo united to thee, who art the fulneſs of all happineſs, by the ſtrongeſt ties of faith, love, and obedience, that, after a life ſpent here in thy ſervice, I may dwell with thee in life everlaſting, and be received into thoſe manſions of eternal bliſs and glory, which thou haſt prepared for them that truly love and fear thee. Grant this, O Lord, through the merits, and for the ſake, of thy beloved Son, Jeſus Chriſt our only Saviour.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

HITHERTO I have conſidered the great advantages of Religion as they reſpect only our well-being in this world, and our going comfortably out of it. But, as there are other advantages attending a good life, infinitely beyond all that have been mentioned; namely, that it will entitle us, through the merits of *Chriſt Jeſus, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;* I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, in the laſt place, that a ſerious and conſcientious obſervance of the duties of religion, will moſt certainly be rewarded with eternal happineſs in the life to come.

And here I ſhall not preſume ſo much as to aim at a deſcription *of that exceeding weight of glory* which God has reſerved for thoſe that truly love him. In the Scripture, indeed, the glories of the other world are repreſented to us, in condeſcenſion to our weak capacities, as a *kingdom, and a crown; an eternal kingdom, and a never-fading crown:* but the ſtate of the other world is a ſtate ſo unknown to us, and ſo much above our imperfect conceptions, that we ſhall never be able fully to comprehend it, till we arrive at the actual enjoyment of it. For, though we know that we ſhall there ſee God, and the bleſſed Jeſus, who *loved us, and gave himſelf for us,* and ſhall to all eternity enjoy *him* who is the ſource and fountain of all good; that we ſhall there converſe with ſaints and angels, and for ever be

be ſinging anthems of praiſe to our great Creator and Redeemer; yet, how great the pleaſure of this will be, and with what extaſies and raptures our ſouls ſhall then break forth, when they taſte of the *fulneſs of that joy which is in the preſence of God for evermore*, is what our finite underſtandings cannot poſſibly reach. Of this, however, we may reſt aſſured, that the things which God hath réſerved for them that love him, are ſuch *as neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* And as this is ſufficient for us, at preſent, to know, in general, concerning this matter, all curious enquiries into the preciſe nature of the happineſs of the next life will be of ſmall uſe to us: They may fill our heads with fine ſpeculations, but will ſignify little to direct our

practice. What we are more concerned to know, and in the moſt explicit manner, is, that our ſincere obedience to God's commandments will certainly be rewarded with eternal life and happineſs. This, indeed, is a matter which it imports us to be well aſſured of; that we may not be weary of well-doing, but *may run with patience the race that is ſet before us*, (HEB. xii. 1.) *and preſs towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* PHIL. iii. 14.

There are ſome, indeed, (and a melancholy reflection it is that there are any ſuch,) who would have us believe, that we die like the beaſts which periſh; and that when we leave this world there is an end of our exiſtence. But theſe, upon enquiry, I believe, will be always found to be perſons

ſons who firſt live as if there was no God, and then endeavour to perſuade themſelves, and others, that there really is none; ſo that, inſtead of regulating their practice by their faith, they do moſt prepoſterouſly ſuit their faith to their practice. I ſhall not concern myſelf at preſent with theſe men; my deſign being chiefly for the ſake of thoſe who believe the Chriſtian Religion, and the revelation of God's will in the Holy Scriptures. And ſurely to ſuch it can be no doubt, but that in thoſe ſacred writings *we have eternal life;* and that the performance of God's commandments is the certain and indiſpenſible condition of obtaining it.

It is true, natural religion will teach us, not only that *God is, but that he is a rewarder of them that diligently*

ſeek him. But it hath pleaſed God, of his great goodneſs, not to leave us to the light of nature alone to diſcover this weighty truth. The rewards of another life are ſo fully and clearly revealed in the writings of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and the way to obtain them is there ſo plainly laid down, that there is no room for any doubt or uncertainty concerning that matter. Whatever dark or imperfect notions the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, had of a future ſtate, it is certain, *that life and immortality is now brought to light by the Goſpel:* and we may reſt aſſured, that though, when we die, our bodies ſhall be laid in the cold chambers of the grave, and there become the food of worms, and moulder into duſt; yet it will not be long *ere this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall put*

put on immortality. 1 COR. xv. 53.— *For God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead:* (ACTS. xvii. 31.) a day *wherein we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 2 COR. v. 10.— *And then all that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth: they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.* JOHN v. 28, 29.

He then who believes the Goſpel (as every one muſt that lives under

the influence of it, unleſs he be wretchedly blinded by his luſts and paſſions) can never doubt of theſe two great articles of the Chriſtian Religion, *the reſurrection of the body, and the life everlaſting.* The poſſibility of the former hath been made evident by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead; and the certainty of the latter appears from the expreſs declarations of God in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, the whole tenor of the Chriſtian Religion ſufficiently proves it; every precept of which tends to purify and refine our natures, and to fit and prepare us for the ſociety of ſaints and angels in another life. The *Apoſtle* aſſures us, that *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us, that we ſhould live together with him.*

THES.

THES. v. 9, 10.—And St. John tells us, that *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* JOHN iii. 16.

If then we believe that God is infinitely juſt and true, we can never doubt that, at the great day of retribution, *he will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory and honour and immortality,* he (who is *truth* itſelf, and cannot *deceive*) hath promiſed *eternal life: but to them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, he* hath declared that he will pour forth *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man that doth evil; of the*

the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile. ROM. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Our Saviour, in his expoſition of the parable of the *tares*, tells us, that, *at the end of the world the Son of Man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.* MATT. xiii. 40, 41, 42.—And ſo in his expoſition of the parable of the *net*, in the ſame chapter, he ſays, that, at *the end of the world, the angels ſhall come forth and ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.* Ver. 49, 50. — Thus again, we are told by our Saviour, that *when the Son of Man ſhall come*

in

in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory, and before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats: and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall he ſay unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: (MATT. XXV. 31, 32, 33, 34.) *but to them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Ver. 41.—*And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Ver. 46.

This, as it is a plain and lively deſcription of the awful ſolemnity of that

that great and tremendous day, *when the Son of Man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, to judge the quick and the dead;* (MATT. xvi. 27.) ſo it is ſufficient to convince us, that, though, *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord,* (HEB. xii. 14.) yet that every one who believes the Goſpel, and ſincerely obeys the precepts of it, ſhall aſſuredly *enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* This was the very purchaſe of Chriſt's blood, and the end for which he was contented to be given up into the hands of cruel men, to buffetted, ſpit upon, and evil-entreated, and at laſt to ſuffer a cruel and ignominious death upon the croſs. *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,* (TIT. ii. 14.) *and become the author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him.* HEB. v. 9.—*Though he was rich, yet*

for

for our ſakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. 2 COR. viii. 9.—*He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.* ISAI. liii. 5.

The redemption of mankind was thought a deſign worthy the Son of God. The ſouls of men were of ſo great a value in *his* ſight, that he eſteemed nothing too much, or too great, to ſuffer for their ſakes. He ſaw and pitied our miſery, and knew that without a Saviour we muſt be loſt for ever; and therefore condeſcended ſo far as to humble himſelf even to the death upon the croſs, for us miſerable ſinners, who lay in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, that he might

might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlaſting life. So that though we *were ſometimes afar off*, yet being *now made nigh by the blood of Chriſt, we are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God.* EPHS. ii. 13, 19.— And if we are careful to perform our parts, we may aſſuredly ſay with St. Paul, that *henceforth there is laid up for us a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give us at that day.* 2 Tim. iv. 8.— For we have the promiſe of *him* who is *truth* itſelf, and cannot deceive us, that, if we are *faithful unto death, he will give us a crown of life.* REVEL. ii. 10.

And what a glorious incitement is this to all men *to live ſoberly, righteouſly,*

ly, and godlily, in this preſent world! What can be more effectual to make us *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,* than to know *that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord;* (1 COR. xv. 58.) that no good action which we do ſhall be loſt and fruitleſs: on the contrary, that, in a little time, all our ſervices will be infinitely rewarded; that every grace and virtue which we exerciſe in this life, and every degree of them, *ſhall receive their juſt recompence at the reſurrection of the juſt;* and that, if we ſerve God faithfully and ſincerely, we may be aſſured, that, through the tender mercies of our heavenly Father, and the merits of our Redeemer, we ſhall be received into a place of everlaſting reſt and peace; where we ſhall adore and praiſe the Author of our

our ſalvation, and contemplate the glorious perfections of his majeſty, with a joy and ſatisfaction infinitely exceeding all that we can now poſſibly conceive?

'O bleſſed time!' (to uſe the words of Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*) 'when mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life! and death and ſorrow ſhall be no more! when we ſhall be eaſed of all our pains, and reſolved of all our doubts, and be purged from all our ſins, and be freed from all our fears, and be happy beyond our hopes! and have all this happineſs ſecured to us beyond the power of time and change!'

As theſe conſiderations cannot but at preſent fill our hearts *with joy unſpeakable*, and excite us continually to

to give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; (COL. i. 12, 13.) ſo, when we come to have a nearer and more immediate view of the glories of that kingdom which God hath prepared for us, how will our ſouls break forth into extaſies of love and joy! how will it tranſport us to ſee him whom we have loved and faithfully ſerved! to ſee him, not arraigned for a malefactor, not hanging in a ſhameful manner upon the croſs! but to ſee him, in all his majeſty and glory, ſitting in a triumphant manner upon his throne, adored by angels and arch-angels; *thouſand thouſands miniſtering unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtanding before him!*

him! DAN. vii. 10.—To ſee him, I ſay, not as an angry and incenſed judge, but as a merciful Saviour and Redeemer, looking upon his faithful and beloved ſervants with the tendereſt affection, and receiving them into the arms of his everlaſting mercy, with thoſe raviſhing words, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!* MATT. XXV. 34.

But then, on the other hand, with what anguiſh and deſpair will the wicked and ungodly behold the dreadful ſolemnities of that awful day! how will they tremble and be confounded, when the *Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God,* and

and obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? 2 THESS. i. 7, 8.—When they ſhall ſee the *Heavens paſſing away with a great noiſe, and the elements melting with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and the works that are therein, burnt up!* (2 PET. iii. 10.) when they ſhall behold hell open to receive them, and the great Judge of the world, with terror in his looks, ready to pronounce that dreadful ſentence,—*Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!* MATT. XXV. 41.

Oh! in what confuſion and agonies will thoſe ſouls be to whom thoſe dreadful words ſhall then be ſpoken! How will they *call upon the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath*

wrath of the Lamb! REV. vi. 16.— But, alas! what will that avail them, when *the great day of his wrath is come!* Whither ſhall they betake themſelves, when *both the earth and the heavens ſhall flee from the preſence of the Judge!* REV. XX. 11.— If the Saviour of the world condemns them, who ſhall intercede in their behalf? If *he*, that once died to purchaſe their ſalvation, will not ſave them, (as it is certain he will not ſave the wicked and impenitent,) to whom ſhall they fly for ſuccour! It will then be too late to cry for mercy, when the time of judgment is come; too late to lament their folly and madneſs, when the time of working is over: all prayers and entreaties, all tears and repentance, will then be in vain. *He that is unjuſt* muſt be *unjuſt ſtill; and he that is filthy* muſt be

be *filthy ſtill.* REV. xxii. 11.—*As the tree is fallen, ſo it muſt lie* for ever. The time of trial, the day of grace, is ended, *and there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin;* but a *fiery indignation* muſt *devour them.* HEB. x. 26, 27.—The dreadful hour is come, when they muſt be baniſhed for ever from the enjoyment of him *in whoſe preſence* alone is *fulneſs of joy*, and be doomed to thoſe lakes of fire and brimſtone, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;* where they muſt be bound in everlaſting chains, and be *day and night, for ever and ever,* (REV. xx. 10.) *tormented* by the devil and his accurſed ſpirits, (thoſe cruel and unrelenting beings,) in the flames of a moſt outrageous and never-to-be extinguiſhed fire.

'Could I repreſent to you (ſays 'Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, in one of his 'excellent ſermons) the horror of that 'diſmal priſon into which wicked and 'impure ſouls are to be thruſt, and 'the miſery they muſt there endure, 'without the leaſt ſpark of comfort, 'or glimmering of hope; how they 'wail and groan under the intolera-'ble wrath of God, the inſolent ſcorn 'and cruelty of devils, the ſevere 'laſhes and ſtings, the raging anguiſh 'and horrible deſpair, of their own 'minds, without intermiſſion, without 'pity, and without hope of ever ſee-'ing an end of that miſery which yet 'is inſupportable for one moment; 'could I repreſent theſe things to you 'according to the terror of them, 'what effect muſt they have upon us! 'with what patience could any man 'bear

'bear to think of plunging himſelf 'into this miſery, and, by his own 'wilful fault and follies, endanger his 'coming into this place and ſtate of 'torments!'

Oh! who, indeed, can think of theſe things without reſolving, in good earneſt, to flee from the wrath to come, and to ſecure a happy eternity, by a life of virtue and righteouſneſs! Who, that believes *the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God*, that conſiders what it is to dwell in the moſt exquiſite miſery and torments to all eternity; who, I ſay, that conſiders theſe truths will not immediately reſolve *to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, but give himſelf up entirely to the ſervice and obedience of the bleſſed Jeſus, with unfeigned reſolu-

tions of *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent world!* In a word, who, that is truly wiſe, and conſiders that time itſelf, compared with eternity is ſhort, and that the time of man is much ſhorter; that eternity has neither end nor change; and that every man is haſtening to an eternal and invariable ſtate, and will ſoon be ſummoned to appear before the awful tribunal of God; there to give an account of his actions; and, according as he has behaved himſelf in this life, be then conſigned to a place of endleſs happineſs or miſery: who, I ſay, that reflects upon theſe great and important truths with that ſerioufneſs and concern which they deſerve, would ever reſign his integrity, and part with that invaluable prize, *a good conſcience*, for the greateſt happineſs this world could promiſe

promiſe him! How is it poſſible that a man, who will give himſelf time to conſider what it is to be under the eternal diſpleaſure of Almighty God, ſhould do any thing wilfully and deliberately, which he knows will provoke his anger! What wiſe man would not rather ſubmit to the worſt that could befall him here in a *ſhort* life, than to run the leaſt riſque of of, fending *him* on whom his welfare and happineſs muſt depend hereafter, as well as at preſent; not only in this life, but through all eternity: eſpecially when he conſiders what obligations he is under to approve himſelf a faithful ſervant of his great Maſter, and to direct and govern his whole conduct by the will of his Creator; when he reflects upon the infinite love of God, manifeſted in all the works of his creation and providence, but par-

ticularly in that ſtupendous myſtery of our redemption; when he thinks *upon the breadth and length, the height and depth of that love of God*, which moved him to ſend his only-begotten Son into the world, *to be the propitiation for our ſins*, and to ſuffer a cruel and ignominious death upon the croſs, *that we might not periſh, but have everlaſting life!* Oh! how is it poſſible that any man, with ſuch impreſſions on his mind, ſhould not be filled with ſo grateful a ſenſe of what God has done for him, as to endeavour, all that in him lies, to act ſuitably to the infinite love of ſo merciful a Father, ſo kind and loving a Saviour! Surely the love of God muſt conſtrain us. But, if there be any one ſo ſtupid and inſenſible as not to be wrought upon by ſuch powerful motives, let him reflect upon *the terrors*

rors of the Lord, and aſk himſelf ſeriouſly this important queſtion, Whether he is able to *dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Let him think upon that terrible day of the Lord, which, whether he thinks of it or not, will moſt aſſuredly come, *when all that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation;* (JOHN v. 28, 29.) *when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, ſhall hide themſelves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and ſhall ſay to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of* him *that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* REV. vi. 15, 16. Let him revolve in his thoughts the

miſerable condition of thoſe wretched ſouls that are now ſhut up in the regions of everlaſting darkneſs, among an accurſed company of infernal ſpirits; and then tell me, whether he thinks the ſhort and momentary pleaſures of a wicked life will compenſate for endleſs miſery and torments.

There is no one, I believe, who thinks at all, but muſt think otherwiſe. But the great misfortune is, that many men are ſo inflamed by their luſts and paſſions, that they are ſeldom cool enough for ſober reflections. Yet, if they would be perſuaded frequently to meditate upon death and judgment; if they would repreſent to their minds what a vaſt diſproportion there is between time and eternity, and conſider that the pleaſures of ſin, at beſt, *are but for a ſeaſon*, whereas its puniſhment

ment is endleſs and intolerable; I ſay, could men be brought to think of theſe things with any ſerioufneſs, I doubt not but ſuch thoughts would in time have their proper effect, and would ſo thoroughly convince them of the great folly and danger of ſin, as to make them in good earneſt ſet about the great work of their ſalvation.

'The judgment to come is a very 'amazing conſideration: it is a fear-'ful thing to hear of it; but it will be 'much more terrible to ſee it, eſpeci-'ally to thoſe whoſe guilt muſt needs 'make them ſo heartily concerned in 'the diſmal conſequences of it: and 'yet, as ſure as I ſtand and you ſit 'here, *this great and terrible day of 'the Lord will come;* and *who may 'abide his coming!* What ſhall we

'do when that day ſhall ſurprize us
'careleſs and unprepared! What un-
'ſpeakable horror and amazement
'will then take hold of us, when,
'*lifting up our eyes to Heaven, we*
'*ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in*
'*the clouds with power and great*
'*glory!* when that powerful voice,
'which ſhall pierce the ears of the
'dead, ſhall ring through the world,
'*Ariſe, ye dead, and come to judg-*
'*ment!* when the mighty trumpet
'ſhall ſound, and waken the ſleepers
'of a thouſand years, and ſummon
'the diſperſed parts of the bodies of
'all men, that ever lived, to rally to-
'gether, and take their places! and
'the ſouls and bodies of men, which
'have been ſo long ſtrangers to one
'another, ſhall meet, and be united
'again, to receive the doom due to
'their deeds! What fear ſhall then

'ſurprize

'ſurprize ſinners! and how will they 'tremble at the preſence of the great 'Judge, and for the glory of his ma-'jeſty! How will their conſciences 'fly in their faces, and their own 'hearts condemn them for their wick-'ed and ungodly lives, and even pre-'vent that ſentence, which yet ſhall 'certainly be paſſed and executed 'upon them!' *Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 412.

Oh! let me then intreat every one, with all the earneſtneſs that a matter of ſuch vaſt importance requires, frequently and ſeriouſly to think upon the tremendous day of judgment, and the great account they muſt then give; to conſider with themſelves how their accounts ſtand with reſpect to another life; and what a dreadful condition they will be in, if they ſhould be

called to appear at the *judgment-ſeat of Chriſt*, before they have made their peace with God, and ſecured an intereſt in the merits and interceſſion of their great Judge. But eſpecially let me perſuade thoſe who, in purſuit of their unlawful pleaſures, have plunged themſelves in ſenſuality and wickedneſs, to ſtand ſtill a moment, and conſider whither they are a going. Let me beg of them, as they have any regard for their preſent peace and happineſs, or any value for their precious ſouls; as they would not leave this world under the terrors and agonies of a guilty conſcience, nor appear at the laſt day, in the preſence of God, and angels, and of men, under all the circumſtances of horror, ſhame, and confuſion; and, laſtly, as they would not then be baniſhed from the preſence of God for

for ever, and be caſt into the bottomleſs pit of deſtruction, to be there tormented without meaſure, and without end; let me, I ſay, prevail upon them not to delay their repentance one moment, but immediately forſake their evil ways, *and turn unto the Lord their God, who is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs;* (JOEL ii. 3.) and who has aſſured us, by his Prophet, that *when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.* EZEK. xviii. 27.

As for thoſe happy Chriſtians who have entered upon a good life, and are engaged in the practice of virtue and religion; who make the glory of God, and the ſalvation of their own ſouls,

ſouls, and the ſouls of all others, their great care and concern; I need only to exhort them to go on in their Chriſtian courſe with courage and reſolution; *to hold faſt their profeſſion,* (HEB. iv. 14.) and, with an unwearied diligence, *to preſs towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus;* (PHIL. iii. 14.) nothing doubting, but *that he that hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* PHIL. i. 6.—God is faithful, that has promiſed; and therefore they may reſt aſſured, that he will remember and reward *their work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* (1 THES. i. 3.) *and that in due ſeaſon they ſhall reap, if they faint not.* GAL. vi. 9.—*Yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come;* (HEB. x. 37.)

and

and his reward is with him, to give to every man according as his work ſhall be. REV. xxii. 12.—*To him that overcometh he will grant to ſit with him in his throne; even as he alſo overcometh, and is ſat down with his Father in his throne.* REV. iii. 21.

O happy, happy time! for thoſe bleſſed ſouls *who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith.* All their labours will then be at an end: that *crown of life,* (REV. ii. 10.) which God hath promiſed to his faithful ſervants, will then be beſtowed upon them; and they ſhall be admitted *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* 1 PET. i. 4.—They ſhall then be received into a place of endleſs bliſs and joy, *where there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there be*

be any more pain; but all tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes: (REV. xxi. 4.) and they ſhall for ever enjoy the moſt perfect and conſummate happineſs, and ſing eternal *Allelujahs of praiſe and thankſgiving unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Amen.

THE

THE CONCLUSION.

IF a good life be attended with ſo many advantages as I hope I have ſhewn it is; if it will make us live happily, die comfortably, and at laſt intitle us, through the merits of our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, to an eternal inheritance in that kingdom which he has purchaſed for us with his moſt precious blood; and if, on the other hand, guilt be its own puniſhment in this world, and everlaſting miſery will moſt certainly be the lot and portion of the wicked and impenitent in the next; *what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs!* and how *ſtedfaſt and immoveable* ſhould this make us in the ways of God's laws, and in the works of his commandments! With what indignation

indignation and abhorrence ſhould we look upon ſin; and with what ſpeed ſhould we flee from that dreadful enemy of our ſouls, which would rob us of our preſent, as well as future, happineſs! How ſhould the conſideration of theſe things make us *take heed leſt there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God!* Heb. iii. 12.—And how ſtedfaſtly ſhould we reſolve *to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, but to walk as *children of light* in the ways of true piety and holineſs; not delaying for one moment the care of our immortal ſouls! *For the day is far ſpent, the night is at hand*, and there is no time to be loſt. We have a great work to do; a work that requires and deſerves our utmoſt care and diligence. If we perform it well, great will be our reward

ward in heaven: for, *faithful is* he *that has promiſed.* And we may be aſſured, that if we are diligent and induſtrious in the work which God hath aſſigned to us in this World, *our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord:* for, if *we have our fruit unto holineſs, our end will be everlaſting life.* But if, inſtead of *working out our ſalvation with fear and trembling,* (PHIL. ii. 12.) that is, with the greateſt cáre and circumſpection, we are negligent and remiſs in the ſervice of our great Lord and Maſter *Jeſus Chriſt*; if, inſtead of *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, in this preſent world,* we lead vicious and wicked lives, and ſpend our days in ſin and vanity; miſerable will be our condition both here and hereafter. For, although God is a being of infinite goodneſs and mercy, and is patient and long-ſuffering towards

towards ſinners, being *unwilling that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance;* yet we muſt remember, that he is alſo infinitely juſt, and will aſſuredly vindicate the honour of his laws. All ſin and wickedneſs is an abomination in his ſight: *He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little,* what will become of the wicked and ungodly! Nothing but a ſincere repentance, and amendment of life, will be ſufficient to ſecure them from the vengeance which he hath threatened to pour down upon all obſtinate and rebellious ſinners: and true repentance will moſt undoubtedly avert his anger. He hath declared himſelf to be a *God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin;* and hath promiſed forgiveneſs of ſins to all them that, with hearty repentance

pentance and true faith, turn unto him. *He hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked ſhould turn from his way and live.* In order to aſſure us of this his great love to mankind, and of his deſire to reconcile us to himſelf, *He hath ſent his Son,* his only, his beloved Son, *into the world, to the end that all that believe in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* JOHN iii. 16.

It hath pleaſed God, of his infinite goodneſs, to eſtabliſh a moſt gracious covenant of mercy to mankind through the mediation of his own Son: and the condition on his part of the covenant, namely, the remiſſion of ſins, is always ready to be made good, if we fail not, on our part, of ſincere repentance, and a thorough reformation of our lives. Our Saviour hath made

made a full, perfect, and ſufficient ſacrifice, oblation, and ſatisfaction, for the ſins of the whole world. He hath ſuffered a cruel and ignominious death upon the croſs for our ſakes; and by his death and ſufferings hath purchaſed this grace for us, that real repentance, and the ſincere endeavour of perfect obedience, ſhall be accepted inſtead of innocence: but, without this repentance, and renewed endeavour of perfect obedience, we ſhall not be accepted upon any terms. The ſacrifice which Chriſt offered upon the croſs, although of infinite value, will be of no avail to us, unleſs, in conformity with his death and reſurrection, we die unto ſin, and riſe again into newneſs of life. Nothing but a good life will entitle us to the favour and love of God: and, without his favour, *we are of all creatures the moſt*

moſt miſerable. Better had it been for us never to have been born, than to have made God our enemy by leading vicious and wicked lives. Let it then, above all things, be our great and conſtant endeavour to make *him* our friend, who is the beſt of beings, the ſovereign good and happineſs of all his creatures, and the fountain and foundation of all our comforts and enjoyments in this life, and of all our hopes and expectations in that which is to come. Let us make Religion the great buſineſs of our lives; and, while we have time and opportunity, let us prepare ourſelves, by a life of virtue and righteouſneſs, for that great account which we muſt one day give. Let not the pleaſures and vanities of this world, which will ſhortly have an end, make us unmindful of the great and momentous concerns of eternity.

O, eternity!

O, eternity! how amazing are the thoughts of it! Who, that conſiders what it is to live for ever in a ſtate of endleſs happineſs or miſery, would not labour and ſtrive with all his might, to ſecure the one and avoid the other! Now, this can only be done by a good life: for *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Heaven is prepared for thoſe, and thoſe only, who fear God, and live in a ſtrict endeavour to perform a perfect obedience to his will. *There ſhall in no wiſe enter into* that holy place *any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* And thoſe only are the good and virtuous, who have kept themſelves from the pollutions of this wicked world, and have led a life of piety and

and renewed obedience toward God, and of love and charity toward their neighbours. To all others, that bleſſed Lamb of God will declare *he knew them not:* to *the workers of iniquity*, even that merciful and compaſſionate Saviour will ſay, *Depart from me.* Dreadful words! Whither muſt ſuch wretched ſouls go, when they are bidden to depart from the Saviour of the world! Whither, indeed, but to that diſmal place of horror and everlaſting miſery *prepared for the Devil and his angels!*

May God, of his infinite mercy, give all of us grace to ſee and follow the things that belong to our everlaſting peace *in this our day*, leſt they be hidden from our eyes, and all opportunities of reconciling ourſelves to our offended God be for ever loſt and

gone! May every one of us be perſuaded to hearken to the advice of *Solomon! Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, and every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* ECCLES. xii. 13, 14.— And may we always keep in remembrance that merciful caution of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour; *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.* MATT. XXV. 15.

PRAYER.

A PRAYER.

O MOST glorious Lord God, and merciful Father in Chriſt Jeſus, who haſt prepared for them that love thee ſuch good things as paſs man's underſtanding, and haſt promiſed to give eternal life to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory and honour and immortality; give me, I moſt humbly beſeech thee, a firm and unſhaken faith in all thy promiſes; that, being fully perſuaded of thoſe important truths which thou haſt revealed to us in the Goſpel, I may make it the principal care and concern of my whole life, to pleaſe and obey thee in all things! And, that I may obtain thoſe things which thou doſt promiſe, make me to love that which thou doſt command;

and grant that, by the aſſiſtance of thy holy ſpirit, I may be enabled to perſevere in the practice of a holy life, even to the laſt moment of my days!

Let the hopes and expectations of that unſpeakable happineſs hereafter, which thou haſt prepared for thoſe who live in obedience to thy commandments, enable me to paſs through this vale of tears and miſery with chearfulneſs and ſubmiſſion to thy bleſſed will, and to bear with patience whatever troubles thou, in thy great wiſdom, ſhalt ſee fit to lay upon me.

O Lord! give me a heart raiſed above the vanities and enticements of this world, and free from all its pollutions and defilements. Fix my thoughts, my hopes, and my deſires, upon

upon Heaven and heavenly things; that, having always in view the crown of glory which thou haſt promiſed to thy faithful ſervants, I may preſs toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus; and, being ſtrengthened by thy grace, and ſupported by thy holy ſpirit, I may run with patience the race which thou haſt ſet before us; that, when the great day of retribútion ſhall come, I may look up to my moſt merciful Judge with joy and comfort, and may hear thoſe raviſhing words pronounced unto me, *Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Grant this, O merciful Father, through the alone merits, and for the ſake of my eternal advocate and mediator Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O MOST gracious God, and kind Father, in all humility of ſoul and body, we preſent ourſelves before the throne of thy majeſty and glory, acknowledging that we are thy dependent creatures, and that from thy bountiful hand we have received many and exceeding great bleſſings.

By thee we were wonderfully made; by thy power we have ever ſince been preſerved; and it is owing to thy great mercy and goodneſs that we have not been cut off in the midſt of our ſins, but that thou haſt been patient and long-ſuffering toward us, and haſt given us this opportunity of coming into thy preſence to renew our praiſes and acknowledgments to thy Divine

Divine Majeſty. O Lord, thy compaſſion fails not. By thee we have been preſerved the night paſt; and to thy goodneſs we aſcribe it, that we are brought in health and ſafety to the beginning of this day.

Accept, we humbly pray thee, of our unfeigned thanks for all the mercies and bleſſings which thou haſt been pleaſed to beſtow upon us; and pardon, we beſeech thee, for the ſake of thy Son Chriſt Jeſus, our great unworthineſs of what thou haſt done for us. Give us ſuch a ſenſe of thy infinite love and kindneſs, as may engage us more and more to love and obey thee, and make us afraid of every thing that may be diſpleaſing in thy ſight.

O Lord! vouchſafe us ſuch a meaſure of thy grace and holy ſpirit, as may defend us againſt the ſnares and temptations of this wicked world, and enable us to overcome all our corrupt and ſinful deſires. Give us a true ſenſe of the ineſtimable value of our ſouls, that we may make it the chief concern of our lives to work out our ſalvation with the greateſt care and diligence, and to ſecure an intereſt in thy favour, which is better than life itſelf.

Withdraw our minds from the love of this world, and place them upon heaven and heavenly things. Give us grace to uſe the enjoyments which thou art pleaſed to beſtow upon us, with temperance, ſobriety, and moderation; with an entire truſt and dependence

pendence on thy fatherly care and good providence, and with a perfect ſubmiſſion to thy bleſſed will in all things.

O Lord! root out of our hearts all pride and envy; all hatred, malice, and ill-will. Put away from us all cenſorioufneſs and uncharitableneſs, all lying and ſlandering, and whatever elſe is contrary to a truly Chriſtian ſpirit: and endue us, we moſt humbly pray thee, with that meekneſs and humility which is in thy ſight of ſo great value, and with all thoſe holy and Chriſtian diſpoſitions which thou loveſt and delighteſt in.

Inſtruct us in all the particulars of our duty which we owe to thee, our neighbour, and ourſelves. Guide us by thy right-hand, and conduct us by

thy good ſpirit, through all the buſineſs and affairs of this life. Teach us to act with faithfulneſs and honeſty in every thing that we undertake; and give us ſuch a dread of thy diſpleaſure, and ſuch a ſenſe of thy continual preſence with us, as may guard us, by thy grace, againſt all the temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the Devil.

[*The following paragraph is to be omitted on a Sunday morning, and that which follows it may be uſed inſtead thereof.*]

Be with us, O Lord, this day, whereever we go, and in whatſoever we do. Preſerve us from the dangers of evil company; from the deceitfulneſs of our own hearts; and more eſpecially from thoſe ſins that are moſt apt to betray and enſnare us. Let thy bleſſ-

ing

ing accompany all our honeſt labours; and vouchſafe us ſuch a meaſure of health, and other temporal bleſſings, as thou ſeeſt beſt and moſt fitting for us. We deſire, O Lord, to leave ourſelves, and all our concerns, in thine hands; humbly beſeeching thee to take us, and all that belong to us, under the protection of thy good providence; and ſo to bleſs, direct, and guide us in this life, that we may at laſt obtain that greateſt of all bleſſings, the eternal ſalvation of our immortal ſouls, through the merits, and for the ſake, of thy dear Son, and our alone Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt, for whom our ſouls adore and praiſe thy glorious name, and in whoſe moſt holy words we ſum up our own and the wants of all mankind, ſaying, *Our Father*, &c.

[*The following paragraph is to be uſed on a Sunday morning inſtead of the foregoing one.*]

Diſpoſe our hearts, O Lord, we humbly beſeech thee, to a ſerious attendance upon thee in all holy duties. Make us duly mindful of all thy ſacred inſtitutions, and grant that we may never ſo far forget the intereſt of our ſouls, as to neglect the religious obſervance of the Chriſtian Sabbath. And as thou haſt brought us to the beginning of this ſacred day, ſo be thou graciouſly pleaſed to take us into thy protection, and to aſſiſt us in a right diſcharge of the duties of it. Withdraw our minds from the care and buſineſs and pleaſure of this life, which will ſhortly have an end, that we may more earneſtly attend upon the

the great concern of that far better life, which is to laſt for evermore. Give us awful thoughts of thy great majeſty, and a lively ſenſe of our own wants; that our prayers and praiſes, and all our ſervices, may be offered up in ſuch a ſerious and devout manner, as may render them acceptable in thy ſight. Make us attentive to thy holy word, and to all the good inſtructions that ſhall this day be given us: and grant that we may not reſt in mere outward performances, but, by a right uſe of thy holy ordinances, may grow in grace, and become every day better Chriſtians, and ſo improve in all virtuous and godly living, that, when this ſhort life ſhall have an end, we may dwell with thee in life everlaſting, through the merits of thy Son, and our alone Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt: for

for whom our ſouls bleſs and praiſe thee, and in whoſe moſt holy words we ſum up our own, and the wants of all mankind, ſaying, *Our Father*, &c.

An

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

O MOST merciful and gracious Lord God! the creator, preſerver, and governor, of the world! Thou art infinite in mercy and goodneſs to all that call upon thee faithfully; and haſt promiſed, that when two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt be in the midſt of them. Look down, we humbly beſeech thee, upon us thy unworthy creatures who are here aſſembled before thee, acknowledging that thou art a God greatly to be feared for thy power and juſtice, greatly to be beloved for thy infinite perfections and goodneſs, and greatly to be praiſed for thy bounty and merciful kindneſs. But as for ourſelves, we confeſs, O Lord, that we are vile and ſinful creatures;

tures; that we have, in many things, acted contrary to thy moſt holy will, and have neither loved thee, feared thee, nor obeyed thee, as we ought to have done. O Lord! if thou ſhould'ſt deal with us as we have deſerved, we could expect nothing from thee but the ſeverities of thy juſt wrath and diſpleaſure.

But, O gracious Father, who delighteſt not in the death of a ſinner, look down upon us, we beſeech thee, in thy Son Chriſt Jeſus; and, for the ſake of his meritorious death and ſufferings, pardon our many and great tranſgreſſions of thy holy laws; and grant that we may amend whatever we have done amiſs, and for the time to come may be more careful to pleaſe thee, and more ſincerely devoted to thy ſervice and obedience.

Convince

Convince us thoroughly, O Lord, of the great folly and danger of ſin; and make us ſo afraid of offending thee, that we may abſtain from all appearance of evil, and do nothing but what is pleaſing in thy ſight. Let the intereſt of our immortal ſouls be our chief care and concern; and grant that we may live as becomes the ſervants of Chriſt, denying all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and living righteouſly, ſoberly, and godlily, in this preſent world.

But, as without thee we are not able to pleaſe thee, grant us the aſſiſtance of thy grace and holy ſpirit, that we may paſs through all the temptations of this world with peace and innocence and ſafety; and enable us to bear up, with courage and perſeverance, againſt all the aſſaults of our great

great adverſary the Devil, who is daily lying in wait to deſtroy us.

Suffer us not, O merciful God, to be led away by the vain and fooliſh cuſtoms of this world, nor ſeduced from our duty by the company and example of the wicked and ungodly; but grant that we may make thy laws the rule of all our actions, and faithfully diſcharge our duty in the ſeveral ſtations wherein thy providence is pleaſed to place us.

Make us duly mindful that thou art preſent every where, and privy to our moſt ſecret thoughts; that we may never dare to do any thing but what thou approveſt, and of which we may not fear to give an account at the great and terrible day of the Lord Jeſus. O fit and prepare us for that ſolemn

ſolemn time by a virtuous and holy life! that, when we ſhall appear before the great Judge of all the world, we may be found in the number of thoſe happy ſouls whom he ſhall then pronounce bleſſed.

Extend thy mercy, O God, to all mankind, and bring them to the light and knowledge and practice of thy laws.

Remove, we humbly beſeech thee, all errors and corruptions, all diviſions and diſſentions, from every communion of Chriſtians; and grant that the lives of thoſe who profeſs themſelves the diſciples of Chriſt, may be holy and exemplary, and ſuch as are conformable to the Goſpel of our bleſſed Saviour.

Reform

Reform all things that are amiſs in theſe kingdoms. Root out from among us all irreligion and profaneneſs, all uncharitableneſs and animoſities. Pardon our great and crying ſins; avert the evils that we have deſerved; continue the light of thy glorious Goſpel among us; and give us all grace to turn from the evil of our ways unto thee the Lord our God!

Bleſs our ſovereign lord the King, and all that are in authority under him both in church and ſtate. Make each of them, in their ſeveral places and ſtations, uſeful and ſerviceable to thy glory, and the good and welfare of this church and nation.

And, O thou, who art the Father of mercies, and God of all conſolation, look down with pity and compaſſion upon

upon all thy afflicted ſervants every where; give them courage and patience, comfort and ſupport; and, in thy good time, a joyful deliverance out of all their troubles.

Send down thy bleſſings, ſpiritual and temporal, upon all our friends and relations. Do good unto thoſe that have, at any time, done or wiſhed us evil; and vouchſafe to every one of us, and to all Chriſtians, whatever thou knoweſt to be beſt for our temporal and eternal welfare.

And now, O Lord, we deſire, with all humility of ſoul and body, to adore thy incomprehenſible majeſty, and to praiſe thy great and glorious name, for all thy manifold mercies vouchſafed to us and all mankind; but, above all, for thy aſtoniſhing love in reconciling

reconciling the world unto thyſelf by the death and ſufferings of thy dear Son.

We bleſs thee for our creation and preſervation, for our health, ſtrength, peace, and ſafety; for the comforts and conveniencies of this life, and the hopes and expectations of a far better, through thy tender mercies in Chriſt Jeſus.

O Lord, imprint in our hearts ſuch a deep ſenſe of thy mercies, that we may ſhew forth thy praiſes not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourſelves to thy ſervice, and by walking before thee in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our lives.

We

We confeſs, O Lord, that we are unworthy of the leaſt of all thy favours; but, in confidence of thy infinite mercy and goodneſs, we do in great humility recommend ourſelves, our ſouls and bodies, and all that belong to us, to thy fatherly care and good providence; humbly beſeeching thee, who art our only ſafety and defence, to take us this night under thy almighty protection, and to give thy holy angels charge over us, that no evil comes near to hurt us.

Refreſh our bodies with quiet reſt and ſleep, and our ſouls with the comforts of thy holy ſpirit: and, when thou ſhalt think fit to take us out of this world, give us everlaſting reſt and peace in thy eternal kingdom, through the merits, and for the

the ſake, of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt, who hath taught us, when we pray, to ſay, *Our Father*, &c.

A Morning

A Morning Prayer for a Perſon in Private.

O MOST great, moſt mighty, and moſt glorious Lord God! look down from the habitation of thy holineſs upon me thy unworthy creature, who am come into thy preſence to adore thy incomprehenſible Majeſty, and to preſent before thee the morning ſacrifice of my unfeigned praiſes, for the many and undeſerved mercies thou haſt beſtowed upon me.

O Lord, I acknowledge, that to thee of right belongs eternal honour, glory, praiſe, and adoration; for thou art the ſovereign Lord of heaven and earth, by whom all things were made,

and by whoſe infinite power and goodneſs they are preſerved and kept in being.

Bleſſed be thy unſpeakable goodneſs, which hath advanced me to ſuch a degree of being, that I am in ſome meaſure capable to know thee, to love thee, to ſerve thee, and to obey thee.

Bleſſed be thy name, O Lord, that I was born of Chriſtian parents, and early dedicated to thee by baptiſm; that by thy grace and goodneſs I have been preſerved to this moment; and that I have in any meaſure eſcaped the pollutions of this wicked world.

I bleſs thee, likewiſe, O Lord, for all thy temporal mercies, and in particular

ticular for the refreſhments of the night paſt; for protecting me from all evil accidents, and for raiſing me up in health and ſafety to praiſe thy goodneſs.

Pardon, O moſt gracious God, all the unworthy returns I have made for thy exceeding kindneſs and mercy; and vouchſafe me ſuch a ſenſe of thy infinite love, as may inſpire me with more vigorous and hearty endeavours to ſerve thee for the time to come.

O Lord, I acknowledge that I am a weak and frail creature, and that without thy help I am not able to bear up againſt the trials and temptations of this world. But ſince thou haſt promiſed to give thy holy ſpirit to them that aſk it, I am emboldened

to implore its divine aſſiſtance to ſtrengthen my weakneſs, to help my infirmities, and ſo to fortify my mind, that I may not be tempted above what I am able to bear, nor ſeduced from my duty to thee, by the deceitful enticements of the world, the fleſh, or the Devil.

Root out of my heart, O God, all pride and vain-glory; all bitterneſs and uncharitableneſs; all envy, hatred, and malice; and ſuffer me not to be led away by any of the fooliſh cuſtoms and falſe maxims of this world. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleaſed, of thy great goodneſs, to endue me with that wiſdom which is from above, which is firſt pure, and then peaceable; with that meekneſs and humility, which is in thy ſight of ſo great price; and with that truly Chriſtian

Chriſtian temper and diſpoſition, which thou loveſt and delighteſt in.

Lord, ſanctify unto me all thy fatherly diſpenſations, and let every thing, thou ſhalt think fit to ſend me, prove a bleſſing and advantage to my ſoul. Give me grace to be entirely ſubmiſſive and contented under all the afflictions, trials, and diſappointments, which thy wiſdom ſhall judge proper in order to bring me to thyſelf; and grant that by every adverſity that ſhall befall me, I may be weaned from this world, and more cloſely united unto thee.

Make me always mindful of my own frailty, of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of this life, and of the eternity of the next. Give me grace ſo to live, as I ſhall wiſh I had done

when I come to die. Let not ſickneſs or death ever ſurprize me unawares, or find me in a ſtate unprepared; but grant that I may finiſh the great work, which thou haſt given me to do, before the night cometh, when no man can work. O let me live in ſuch a conſtant preparation for my latter end, that how ſuddenly ſoever thou ſhalt be pleaſed to take me out of this world, I may be found ready for my great account, through the merits of my bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt.

[*The following paragraph is to be omitted on a Sunday morning, and that which follows it may be uſed inſtead thereof.*]

Be with me, O Lord, this day in all places, and upon all occaſions. Direct and

and guide, ſanctify and preſerve me. Keep me both outwardly in my body, and inwardly in my ſoul. Let thy bleſſing accompany all my honeſt deſigns and undertakings; and grant that I may undertake nothing but what is agreeable to thy bleſſed will. Give unto me, and all that belong to me, ſuch a meaſure of health, and other temporal bleſſings, as thou ſeeſt beſt and moſt fitting for us: but, above all things, give us thy grace and favour, that our lives may be holy, our deaths comfortable, and our eternal ſtate happy and glorious with thee, through the merits of thy Son and our alone Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; in whoſe moſt holy words I ſum up my own, and the wants of all mankind, ſaying, *Our Father*, &c.

[*The following paragraph may be uſed on a Sunday morning inſtead of the preceding one.*]

Accept, I beſeech thee, O moſt gracious God, my hearty deſires to glorify thee in an eſpecial manner on this day, which thou haſt peculiarly ſanctified for thy worſhip and ſervice.

I bleſs thy holy name, O Lord, who, by thy almighty power, madeſt the heavens and the earth, and all that therein is, and preſerveſt and governeſt all that thou haſt made.

I bleſs thee, O Lord, who madeſt man after thine own image, enduing him with underſtanding, reaſon, and liberty; and making him capable of knowing,

knowing, of loving, and of enjoying thee his Creator.

Above all, I bleſs and magnify thy holy name, O Lord, heavenly Father, that thou haſt given thine only Son, Jeſus Chriſt, for the redemption of mankind; that he took our nature upon him; that he died for our ſakes; that he is riſen again from the dead; that he aſcended into heaven, and that he there ſitteth at thy right hand, to make interceſſion for us; that he hath made known to us the way to eternal life, giving us his word for our direction, and his holy ſpirit for our guide and aſſiſtance.

Bleſſed be thy holy name, that thou haſt appointed this day, not only

for a reſt from our ordinary labours and employments, but chiefly for a perpetual commemoration of theſe thy favours, and for giving us ſtated opportunities for thy worſhip and ſervice, and for the care of our immortal ſouls.

My ſoul deſires to bleſs thee, that thou haſt made me a partaker of all theſe ineſtimable advantages.

O Lord, prepare my heart for attending upon thee in thy houſe, and afford me thy gracious aſſiſtance in all the parts of thy ſervice.

Let thy word make deep and laſting impreſſions on me. Help me diligently to improve all opportunities that ſhall be afforded me this day, whether

whether public or private, to the glory of thy great name, and the benefit and comfort of my ſoul, through Jeſus Chriſt my Saviour. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer for a Perſon in Private.

MOST great and mighty God! thou art the ſovereign Lord of heaven and earth, the creator, the preſerver, and governor of all things: thou dwelleſt in that light which no mortal eye can approach, and yet diſdaineſt not to behold the children of men. Look down, I beſeech thee, upon me thy unworthy creature, who am come into thy preſence, adoring thy majeſty, and acknowledging that my dependence is wholly upon thee, who art the author of my being, and the foundation of all my hopes, both here and hereafter.

O Lord,

O Lord, I confeſs that I am a weak and frail creature: my nature is corrupt, and miſerably prone to offend thee. I find a law in my members warring againſt the law in my mind; which I confeſs with ſorrow, hath too often prevailed againſt me. The pleaſures and profits of the world are too apt to engage my affections, and to make me cold and remiſs in the great and important work of my ſalvation. I have been guilty of manifold neglects and omiſſions of my duty towards thee, and have not ſerved thee with that purity of intention, with that ſincerity of heart, with that fervency of ſpirit, with that zeal for thy glory, with that care, and diligence, and conſtancy, that I ought to have done.

O Lord,

O Lord, if thou ſhouldeſt be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, if thou ſhouldeſt call me to a ſtrict account for my life paſt, what could I ſay unto thee! or how ſhould I be able to ſtand in thy ſight! If thou ſhouldeſt deal with me as I have deſerved, I could expect nothing from thee but the ſeverities of thy wrath and diſpleaſure: but, O gracious Father, thou haſt revealed thyſelf to the ſons of men, as a God merciful and gracious, forgiving the tranſgreſſions and iniquities of the repentant ſinner: remember then, I beſeech thee, thy tender mercies, which have been ever of old; and for the ſake and merits of my bleſſed Saviour, forgive, I humbly pray thee, all the ſins and vanities, the follies and indiſcretions, of my life paſt. O! reſerve not my ſins to be puniſhed

puniſhed in the day of thy wrath and diſpleaſure, but blot them out of thy remembrance, that they may never riſe up to my confuſion here, nor to my condemnation hereafter.

O! enable me, by the aſſiſtance of thy grace, to reform whatever thou ſeeſt amiſs in the temper and diſpoſition of my mind, or in any of the actions of my life; that I may love thee more, and ſerve thee better, and do thy will with greater care and diligence, than I have yet done.

O Lord! keep up in my mind a lively ſenſe of my duty towards thee, and of that great account which I muſt one day give. Suffer me not, I beſeech thee, to fall into a careleſs and unthinking ſtate, nor to be unmindful

mindful of that one thing needful, the ſalvation of my immortal ſoul. Make me ſo ſenſible of thoſe dreadful threatnings which thou haſt denounced againſt ſinners, that, whatever elſe I leave undone, I may make it my chief care and concern to ſecure an intereſt in thy favour. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleaſed, of thy great goodneſs, ſo to aſſiſt my weak and feeble endeavours, that I may not be unſucceſsful in a matter of ſuch vaſt concern.

Root out of my heart, O God, by the powerful efficacy of thy grace, all ſinful and corrupt affections. Wean me from the vanities and pleaſures of this world, and give me a full conviction of the uncertainty and inſufficiency of all things here below. O! let

let me never ſeek for reſt and happineſs in the enjoyments of this life; but grant that I may daily aſpire after that eternal and unchangeable ſtate of happineſs hereafter, which thou haſt reſerved for thy faithful ſervants; and to which, I beſeech thee, of thy infinite love and mercy, to bring me, through the merits, and for the ſake of thy dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord.

Extend thy mercy, O God, to all mankind. In a more particular manner, I pray thee to be gracious to theſe ſinful nations to which I belong; to pardon our great and crying ſins; to avert the judgment which we have moſt juſtly deſerved; and to put away from us the ſpirit of profaneneſs and infidelity, of malice and uncharitableneſs,

charitableneſs, that thou mayeſt delight to dwell amongſt us, and be our God, and we thy people.

Bleſs and preſerve our Sovereign Lord King GEORGE, and grant that all who are in authority under him may faithfully endeavour to promote thy glory, and the good and welfare of this church and nation.

Look with pity and compaſſion upon all thy afflicted ſervants: be a Father to the fatherleſs; heal the ſick; ſupply the wants of the poor and needy; and grant that whatſoever is wanting of outward comforts to any one, may be abundantly made up by the inward conſolations of thy Holy Spirit.

Bleſs

Bleſs all my friends and relations, eſpecially ——; reward all who have done me good, and forgive all who have done or wiſhed me evil; and vouchſafe to every one of us, from the higheſt to the loweſt, whatever in thy great wiſdom thou knoweſt to be needful both for our ſouls and bodies.

And now, O moſt merciful Father, from an humble ſenſe of thy great goodneſs, I adore and praiſe thy glorious name, for all the manifeſtations of thy love and kindneſs vouchſafed unto me. I bleſs thee for my being, for my reaſon, and all the endowments and faculties of my ſoul and body; for my health, friends, food, and raiment, and all the other comforts and conveniencies I enjoy; for thy

thy continual care and watchful providence over me through the whole courſe of my life; and, particularly, for the preſervation and protection of me the day paſt.

Give me grace, I beſeech thee, to make a right improvement of all thy bleſſings; and be thou graciouſly pleaſed to take me, and all that belong to me, this night under the care and protection of thy fatherly providence. Give thy holy angels charge over us; and grant us ſuch refreſhment of ſoul and body as may enable us chearfully to go through the duties of that ſtation wherein thou haſt placed us. And when thou ſhalt be pleaſed to call us out of this world, O! let us be found in the number of thy faithful ſervants, through the merits

merits of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt: for whom my ſoul doth bleſs and praiſe thee, and in whoſe moſt holy words I ſum up all our wants, ſaying, *Our Father*, &c.

A Prayer,

A Prayer, which may be added to the daily Evening Prayer on the Lord's Day.

I AGAIN return my moſt humble and hearty thanks to thee, O Lord my God, for the ſpecial bleſſings of this thy ſacred day; that I have been admitted to the great privilege of joining with thy faithful people, in their aſſemblies for public worſhip, to offer up my praiſes and prayers to thy divine majeſty, in the name of our bleſſed Redeemer; to hear thy holy word read and preached by the miniſters of thy goſpel; and that I have had farther opportunities for employing myſelf more privately in thy worſhip and the care of my immortal ſoul.

I earneſtly

I earneſtly beſeech thee, O Lord, to pardon all the wanderings and diſorders of my mind, and whatſoever elſe thou haſt ſeen amiſs in my attendance upon thee: and graciouſly to accept my ſincere, though weak, endeavours to ſerve thee.

Cauſe thy word, which I have heard or read, to abide in my heart, and to bring forth the fruits of a holy and religious life.

Help me, by the uſe of all the means of grace and ſalvation, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, fitting me more and more for ſeeing and enjoying thee my God, and my bleſſed Redeemer in the life to come: and grant, when I ſhall ceaſe to praiſe and ſerve thee with thy ſaints on earth,

earth, that I may continue to be ſo employed with the bleſſed ſpirits in heaven.

I heartily beg the ſame bleſſings for all my fellow Chriſtians, recommending them and myſelf to thee, my heavenly Father, in the words, and through the interceſſion, of Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, our only Mediator and Advocate.

Our Father, &c.

A Morning

A Morning Prayer for a young Perſon.

O LORD, my heavenly Father, I humbly adore thee, as the maker and governor of the world, the author of my being, the preſerver of my life, and the giver of every good thing.

I heartily thank thee for the comfortable reſt which I have enjoyed the night paſt; that thou haſt preſerved me in ſafety, and raiſed me up in health.

I bleſs thee for all thy goodneſs to me ever ſince I came into the world, and eſpecially for the advantages thou haſt given me, by the inſtruction and improvement of my mind in

the knowledge of thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt my Lord.

Grant, O good God! that the ſenſe of thy favours may ſo deeply affect my heart, that I may ſhew forth my thankfulneſs in the whole courſe of my life. I am thine, O Lord, by creation, by redemption, by my baptiſm and Chriſtian profeſſion, and by all the obligations which thou haſt laid upon me. I deſire to be thine, alſo, by a willing dedication of myſelf to thee every day of my life, and by a conſtant and faithful endeavour to approve myſelf to thee.

I beſeech thee, in thy great mercy, through the mediation of my bleſſed Redeemer, to pardon all my paſt offences, and to enable me, by thy grace,

grace, to diſcern and to amend whatſoever is amiſs in me.

Help me ever to remember the Chriſtian principles which I have learned, and the pious inſtructions which have been given me; and never to depart from the good way in which I have been taught to walk.

Incline my heart to all that is good. Grant that I may be modeſt and humble in my carriage and behaviour; chaſte and pure in all my thoughts, words, and actions; true and juſt in all my dealings; reſpectful and obedient to my ſuperiors; innocent and inoffenſive in my whole converſation; faithful and diligent in the diſcharge of all the duties of that ſtate and condition of life wherein thou haſt placed me: and teach me to fear

and love thee, my God, above all things, and to do to all others as I would they ſhould do unto me.

Make me perfectly contented with my condition, and thankful to thee, who haſt given me all things neceſſary for life and godlineſs. Let thy good providence always take care of me, and let me never place my truſt and confidence in any thing but thee.

Take me, I beſeech thee, into thy protection this day; keep me, if it be thy good will, in health and ſafety. Preſerve me from the vanity of my own heart, and from the temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the Devil. Help me (through a ſenſe of thy conſtant preſence with me, and of the account I am to give unto thee) ſo to govern all my thoughts, words, and actions,

actions, that I may reflect upon them with satisfaction at the close of this day.

Let thy blessing be upon every member of this family, upon all my relations and friends, upon all whom I ought and whom I desire to pray for.

I humbly commit both myself and them to thee, O my God, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and in the words which he himself has taught me.

Our Father, &c.

An Evening Prayer for a young Perſon.

MOST gracious God, my heavenly Father, as I began, ſo I deſire always to end the day, with bleſſing thy holy name, and imploring thy favour.

Honour and worſhip, praiſe and thankſgiving, are due to thee from every underſtanding and reaſonable creature. I heartily bleſs thee, that I am in that number whom thou haſt made to ſerve and love thee, and that thou haſt moreover revealed thyſelf to me, by thy Son Jeſus Chriſt my Redeemer, and encouraged me to call upon thee in his name.

I humbly

I humbly thank thee for thy daily care of me, and particularly for that good providence which hath been over me the day paſt; that thou haſt preſerved me from the many evils to which I am juſtly liable; and haſt beſtowed upon me ſo many good things which I have not deſerved; eſpecially for whatſoever thou haſt enabled me to do, which is acceptable in thy ſight, and which I can reflect upon with ſatisfaction.

I humbly bewail, O Lord, the great weakneſs and corruption of my nature, and the many errors and tranſgreſſions of my life. I humbly beg thy mercy in the pardon of all my ſins, through the mediation of my bleſſed Redeemer; particularly of whatſoever thou haſt ſeen amiſs in me this

this day, either in my thoughts, words, or actions.

Grant, O Lord, that the ſenſe of my unworthineſs may always keep me humble, and work in me an unfeigned repentance of all my ſins; and let the remembrance of them ever excite me to a greater care and watchfulneſs for the time to come. Strengthen in me every good purpoſe and reſolution. Whatſoever part of my duty I know not, do thou teach me; and wherein I have done amiſs, help me to do ſo no more.

Leave me not, O Lord, at any time to myſelf, nor in the hands of my ſpiritual enemies. Preſerve me from thoſe circumſtances that would prove a ſnare or temptation to me. Let thy good

good ſpirit continually enlighten and ſanctify my mind, directing and aſſiſting me through the whole courſe of my life.

Fill me with a ſenſe of my conſtant and entire dependence upon thee, that I may always commit myſelf to thy care, and be ever ſatisfied with thy diſpoſal of me.

Teach me ſo to number my days, that I may apply my heart to true and heavenly wiſdom. Help me to live in a daily preparation for my great change, keeping my conſcience void of offence, both towards thee, and towards men: and grant that I may be always ſo employed, as I ſhall wiſh I had been when I come to die; that whenſoever thou ſhalt think fit to call me out of this world, I may readily

and

and thankfully exchange it for a better.

Take me, I beſeech thee, into thy gracious protection this night. Preſerve me, if it be thy good will, in health and ſafety; and grant me that reſt which may refreſh my body, and diſpoſe me to ſerve thee chearfully, both in body and mind, the enſuing day.

I heartily deſire the good of all mankind; and pray unto thee for the purity, the peace, and the enlargement, of thy holy church; for thy direction and aſſiſtance of all its governors and paſtors, particularly thoſe under whoſe guidance I am placed; for the welfare of my country; for a bleſſing upon the King, and all in authority under him; for the relief and

and comfort of all that are in affliction; for all my friends and relations; beſeeching thee to hear and to accept me, and all that call upon thee, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, our only Lord and Saviour, who has taught me thus to pray:

Our Father, &c.